

Dayananda Saraswati

Dayananda Saraswati^[3] (ⓘ pronunciation) (12 February 1824 – 30 October 1883) was an Indian philosopher, social leader and founder of the Arya Samaj, a reform movement of the Vedic dharma. He was the first to give the call for *Swaraj* as "India for Indians" in 1876, a call later taken up by Lokmanya Tilak.^{[3][4]} Denouncing the idolatry and ritualistic worship, he worked towards reviving Vedic ideologies. Subsequently, the philosopher and President of India, S. Radhakrishnan called him one of the "makers of Modern India", as did Sri Aurobindo.^{[5][6][7]}

Those who were influenced by and followed Dayananda included Rai Sahib Pooran Chand, Madam Cama, Pandit Lekh Ram, Swami Shraddhanand,^[8] Shyamji Krishna Varma, Kishan Singh, Bhagat Singh, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Bhai Parmanand, Lala Hardayal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Ram Prasad Bismil, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ashfaq Ullah Khan,^[9] Mahatma Hansraj, Lala Lajpat Rai,^{[10][11]} and Yogmaya Neupane.^[12]

He was a sanyasi (ascetic) from boyhood and a scholar. He believed in the infallible authority of the Vedas. Dayananda advocated the doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation. He emphasized the Vedic ideals of brahmacharya, including celibacy and devotion to God.

Among Dayananda's contributions were his promoting of the equal rights for women, such as the right to education and reading of Indian scriptures, and his commentary on the Vedas from Vedic Sanskrit in Sanskrit as well as in Hindi.

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Personal

Born	<u>Mool Shankar Tiwari</u> ^[1] <div>12 February 1824</div> <u>Tankara, Company Raj</u> <div>(present-day <u>Gujarat, India</u>)</div>
Died	30 October 1883 (aged 59) ^[2] <div><u>Ajmer, Ajmer-Merwara, British India</u> (present-day <u>Rajasthan, India</u>)</div>
Religion	<u>Hinduism</u>
Nationality	<u>Indian</u>
Founder of	<u>Arya Samaj</u>
Philosophy	<u>Vedic</u>
Religious career	
Guru	<u>Virajanand Dandeesha</u>
Influenced by	<u>Kanada</u> , <u>Yāska</u> , <u>Kashyapa</u> , <u>Patanjali</u> , <u>Pāṇini</u> , <u>Kapila</u> , <u>Akshapada Gautama</u> , <u>Badarayana</u> , <u>Adi Shankara</u> , <u>Ramanuja</u>

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References

Bibliography

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Influenced

Madam Cama, Pandit Lekh Ram, Swami Shradhdhanand, Shyamji Krishna Varma, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Lala Hardayal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Ram Prasad Bismil, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Mahatma Hansraj, Lala Lajpat Rai

Literary works

Satyarth Prakash (1875)

Rigvedadibhashyabhumika

Vyavharabhanu

Quotation

There are undoubtedly many learned men among the followers of every religion. They should free themselves from prejudice, accept the universal truths – that is those truths that are to be found alike in all religions and are of universal application-,reject all things in which the various religions differ and treat each other lovingly, it will be greatly to the advantage of the world.

Early life

Dayananda Saraswati was born on the 10th day of waning moon in the month of Purnimanta Falguna (12

February 1824) on the tithi to a Hindu family^[13] in Jeevapar Tankara, Kathiawad region (now Morbi district of Gujarat.)^{[14][15]} His original name was Mool Shankar Tiwari because he was born in Dhanu Rashi and Mul Nakshatra. His father was Karshanji Lalji Kapadi, and his mother was Yashodabai.

When he was eight years old, his Yajnopavita Sanskara ceremony was performed, marking his entry into formal education. His father was a follower of Shiva and taught him the ways to impress Shiva. He was also taught the importance of keeping fasts. On the occasion of Shivratri, Dayananda sat awake the whole night in obedience to Shiva. During one of these fasts, he saw a mouse eating the offerings and running over the idol's body. After seeing this, he questioned that if Shiva could not defend himself against a mouse, then how could he be the saviour of the world.^[16]

The deaths of his younger sister and his uncle from cholera led Dayananda to ponder the meaning of life and death. He began asking questions which worried his parents. He was engaged in his early teens, but he decided marriage was not for him and ran away from home in 1846.^{[17][18]}

Dayananda Saraswati spent nearly twenty-five years, from 1845 to 1869, as a wandering ascetic, searching for religious truth. He gave up material goods and lived a life of self-denial, devoting himself to spiritual pursuits in forests, retreats in the Himalayan Mountains, and pilgrimage sites in northern India. During these years he practised various forms of yoga and became a disciple of a religious teacher named Virajanand Dandeesh. Virajanand believed that Hinduism had strayed from its historical roots and that many of its practices had become impure. Dayananda Saraswati promised Virajanand that he would devote his life to restoring the rightful place of the Vedas in the Hindu faith.^[19]

Dayanand's mission

He believed that Hinduism had been corrupted by divergence from the founding principles of the Vedas and that Hindus had been misled by the priesthood for the priests' self-aggrandizement. For this mission, he founded the Arya Samaj, enunciating the Ten Universal Principles as a code for Universalism, called

Krinvanto Vishwaryam. With these principles, he intended the whole world to be an abode for Aryas (Nobles).

His next step was to reform Hinduism with a new dedication to God. He travelled the country challenging religious scholars and priests to discussions, winning repeatedly through the strength of his arguments and knowledge of Sanskrit and Vedas.^[20] Hindu priests discouraged the laity from reading Vedic scriptures, and encouraged rituals, such as bathing in the Ganges River and feeding of priests on anniversaries, which Dayananda pronounced as superstitions or self-serving practices. By exhorting the nation to reject such superstitious notions, his aim was to educate the nation to return to the teachings of the Vedas, and to follow the Vedic way of life. He also exhorted the Hindu nation to accept social reforms, including the importance of Cows for national prosperity as well as the adoption of Hindi as the national language for national integration. Through his daily life and practice of yoga and asanas, teachings, preaching, sermons and writings, he inspired the Hindu nation to aspire to *Swarajya* (self governance), nationalism, and spiritualism. He advocated the equal rights and respects to women and advocated for the education of all children, regardless of gender.

ओ३म्

Aum or Om is considered by the Arya Samaj to be the highest and most proper name of God.

Dayanand also made critical analyses of faiths including Christianity & Islam, as well as of other Indian faiths like Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. In addition to discouraging idolatry in Hinduism,^[21] he was also against what he considered to be the corruption of the true and pure faith in his own country. Unlike many other reform movements of his times within Hinduism, the Arya Samaj's appeal was addressed not only to the educated few in India, but to the world as a whole as evidenced in the sixth principle of the Arya Samaj. As a result, his teachings professed universalism for all the living beings and not for any particular sect, faith, community or nation.

Arya Samaj allows and encourages converts to Hinduism. Dayananda's concept of dharma is stated in the "Beliefs and Disbeliefs" section of *Satyartha Prakash*, he says:

"I accept as Dharma whatever is in full conformity with impartial justice, truthfulness and the like; that which is not opposed to the teachings of God as embodied in the Vedas. Whatever is not free from partiality and is unjust, partaking of untruth and the like, and opposed to the teachings of God as embodied in the Vedas—that I hold as adharma."

"He, who after careful thinking, is ever ready to accept truth and reject falsehood; who counts the happiness of others as he does that of his own self, him I call just."

— Satyartha Prakash

Dayananda's Vedic message emphasized respect and reverence for other human beings, supported by the Vedic notion of the divine nature of the individual. In the ten principles of the Arya Samaj, he enshrined the idea that "All actions should be performed with the prime objective of benefiting mankind", as opposed to following dogmatic rituals or revering idols and symbols. The first five principles speak of Truth, while the last five speak of a society with nobility, civics, co-living, and disciplined life. In his own life, he interpreted moksha to be a lower calling, as it argued for benefits to the individual, rather than calling to emancipate others.

Dayananda's "back to the Vedas" message influenced many thinkers and philosophers the world over.^[22]

Activities

Dayanand Saraswati is recorded to have been active since he was 14, which time he was able to recite religious verses and teach about them. He was respected at the time for taking part in religious debates. His debates were attended by large crowds.

On 22 October 1869 in Varanasi, where he won a debate against 27 scholars and 12 expert pandits. The debate was said to have been attended by over 50,000 people. The main topic was "Do the Vedas uphold deity worship?"^{[23][24]}

Arya Samaj

Dayananda Saraswati's creation, the Arya Samaj, condemned practices of several different religions and communities, including such practices as idol worship, animal sacrifice, pilgrimages, priest craft, offerings made in temples, the castes, child marriages, meat eating and discrimination against women. He argued that all of these practices ran contrary to good sense and the wisdom of the Vedas.

Views on superstitions

He severely criticized practices which he considered to be superstitions, including sorcery, and astrology, which were prevalent in India at the time. Below are several quotes from his book, Satyarth Prakash:

"They should also counsel then against all things that lead to superstition, and are opposed to true religion and science, so that they may never give credence to such imaginary things as ghosts (Bhuts) and spirits (Preta)."

— Satyarth Prakash

"All alchemists, magicians, sorcerers, wizards, spiritists, etc. are cheats and all their practices should be looked upon as nothing but downright fraud. Young people should be well counseled against all these frauds, in their very childhood, so that they may not suffer through being duped by any unprincipled person."

— Satyarth Prakash

On Astrology, he wrote,

when these ignorant people go to an astrologer and say " O Sir! What is wrong with this person"? He replies "The sun and other stars are maleficent to him. If you were to perform a propitiatory ceremony or have magic formulas chanted, or prayers said, or specific acts of charity done, he will recover. Otherwise, I should not be surprised, even if he were to lose his life after a long period of suffering."

Inquirer – Well, Mr. Astrologer, you know, the sun and other stars are but inanimate things like this earth of ours. They can do nothing but give light, heat, etc. Do you take them for conscious being possessed of human passions, of pleasure and anger, that when offended, bring on pain and misery, and when propitiated, bestow happiness on human beings?

Astrologer – Is it not through the influence of stars, then, that some people are rich and others poor, some are rulers, whilst others are their subjects?

Inq. – No, it is all the result of their deeds....good or bad.

Ast. – Is the Science of stars untrue then?

Inq. – No, that part of it which comprises Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, etc., and which goes by the name of Astronomy is true; but the other part that treats of the influence of stars on human beings and their actions and goes by the name of Astrology is all false.

— Chapter 2.2 Satyarth Prakash

He makes a clear distinction between Jyotisha Shaastra and astrology, calling astrology a fraud.

"Thereafter, they should thoroughly study the Jyotisha Shaastra – which includes Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Geography, Geology, and Astronomy in two years. They should also have practical training in these Sciences, learn the proper handling of instruments, master their mechanism, and know how to use them. But they should regard Astrology – which treats of the influence of stars and constellation on the destinies of man, of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness of time, of horoscopes, etc. – as a fraud, and never learn or teach any books on this subject.

— Under "The scheme of studies" Page 73 of the English Version of Satyarth Prakash

Views on other religions

Islam

He viewed Islam to be waging wars and immorality. He doubted that Islam had anything to do with the God, and questioned why a God would hate every non-believer, allowing the slaughter of animals, and command Muhammad to slaughter innocent people.^[25]

He further described Muhammad as "imposter", and one who held out "a bait to men and women, in the name of God, to compass his own selfish needs". He regarded Quran as "Not the Word of God. It is a human work. Hence it cannot be believed in".^[26]

Christianity

His analysis of the Bible was based on an attempt to compare it with scientific evidence, morality, and other properties. His analysis claimed that the Bible contains many stories and precepts that are immoral, praising cruelty, deceit and that encourage sin.^[27] One commentary notes many alleged discrepancies and fallacies of logic in the Bible e.g. that God fearing Adam eating the fruit of life and becoming his equal displays jealousy. His critique attempts to show logical fallacies in the Bible, and throughout he asserts that the events depicted in the Bible portray God as a man rather than an omniscient, omnipotent or complete being.

He opposed the perpetual virginity of Mary, adding that such doctrines are simply against the nature of law, and that God would never break his own law because God is omniscient and infallible.

Sikhism

He regarded Guru Nanak as "rogue", who was quite ignorant about Vedas, Sanskrit, Shashtra, and otherwise Nanak wouldn't be mistaken with words.^[28]

He further said that followers of Sikhism are to be blamed for making up stories that Nanak possessed miraculous powers and met Gods. He criticized Guru Gobind Singh and other Gurus, saying they "invented fictitious stories", although he also recognized Gobind Singh to be "indeed a very brave man."^[29]

Jainism

He regarded Jainism as "a most dreadful religion", writing that Jains were intolerant and hostile towards the non-Jains.^[22]

Buddhism

Dayananda described Buddhism as ridiculous and "atheistic".^[30] He describes the type of "salvation" Buddhism as being attainable even to dogs and donkeys. He further criticized the Cosmogony of Buddhism, stating that the earth was not created.

Assassination attempts

Dayananda was subjected to many unsuccessful assassination attempts on his life.^[23]

According to his supporters, he was poisoned on a few occasions, but due to his regular practice of Hatha Yoga he survived all such attempts. One story tells that attackers once attempted to drown him in a river, but Dayananda dragged the assailants into the river instead, though he released them before they drowned.^[31]

Another account claims that he was attacked by Muslims who were offended by his criticism of Islam while meditating on the Ganges river. They threw him into the water but he is claimed to have saved himself because his pranayama practice allowed him to stay under water until the attackers left.^[32]

Assassination

In 1883, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, Jaswant Singh II, invited Dayananda to stay at his palace. The Maharaja was eager to become Dayananda's disciple and to learn his teachings. Dayananda went to the Maharaja's restroom during his stay and saw him with a dancing girl named Nanhi Jaan. Dayananda asked the Maharaja to forsake the girl and all unethical acts and to follow the dharma like a true Arya (noble). Dayananda's suggestion offended Nanhi, who decided to take revenge.^[2]

On 29 September 1883, she bribed Dayananda's cook, Jagannath, to mix small pieces of glass in his nightly milk.^[33] Dayananda was served glass-laden milk before bed, which he promptly drank, becoming bedridden for several days, and suffering excruciating pain. The Maharaja quickly arranged doctor's services for him. However, by the time doctors arrived, his condition had worsened, and he had developed large bleeding sores. Upon seeing Dayananda's suffering, Jagannath was overwhelmed with guilt and confessed his crime to Dayananda. On his deathbed, Dayananda forgave him, and gave him a bag of money, telling him to flee the kingdom before he was found and executed by the Maharaja's men.^[2]

Later, Maharaja arranged for him to be sent to Mount Abu as per the advice of Residency, however, after staying for some time in Abu, on 26 October 1883, he was sent to Ajmer for better medical care.^[33] There was no improvement in his health and he died on the morning of the Hindu festival of Diwali on 30 October 1883 chanting mantras.^{[33][34]}

Cremation and commemoration

He breathed his last at Bhinai Kothi at Bhinai 54 km south of Ajmer, and his ashes were scattered at Ajmer in Rishi Udyan as per his wishes.^[35] Rishi Udyan, which has a functional Arya Samaj temple with daily morning and evening yajna homa, is located on the banks of Ana Sagar Lake off the NH58 Ajmer-Pushkar Highway. An annual 3 day Arya Samaj melā is held every year at Rishi Udyan on Rishi Dayanand's death anniversary at the end of October, which also entails vedic seminars, vedas memorisation competition, yajna, and Dhavaja Rohan flag march.^[36] It is organized by the Paropkarini Sabha, which was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati on 16 August 1880 in Meerut, registered in Ajmer on 27 February 1883, and since 1893 has been operating from its office in Ajmer.^[36]



Information board inside Navlakha Mahal.

Every year on Maha Shivaratri, Arya Samajis celebrate Rishi Bodh Utsav during the 2 days mela at Tankara organized by Tankara Trust, during which Shobha Yatra procession and Maha Yajna is held, event is also attended by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Chief Minister of Gujarat Vijay Rupani.^[37]

Navlakha Mahal inside Gulab Bagh and Zoo at Udaipur is also associated with him where he wrote the second edition of his seminal work, Satyarth Prakash, in Samvat 1939 (1882-83 CE).^[38]

Legacy

Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University in Ajmer, DAV University (Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Schools System) in Jalandhar are named after him. So are over 800 schools and colleges under D.A.V. College Managing Committee, including Dayanand College at Ajmer. Industrialist Nanji Kalidas Mehta built the Maharshi Dayanand Science College and donated it to the Education Society of Porbandar, after naming it after Dayananda Saraswati.

Dayananda Saraswati is most notable for influencing the freedom movement of India. His views and writings have been used by different writers, including Shyamji Krishna Varma, who founded India House in London and guided other revolutionaries was influenced by him; Subhas Chandra Bose; Lala Lajpat Rai; Madam Cama; Vinayak Damodar Savarkar; Lala Hardayal; Madan Lal Dhingra; Ram Prasad Bismil; Mahadev Govind Ranade;^[9] Swami Shraddhanand; S. Satyamurti; Pandit Lekh Ram; Mahatma Hansraj; and others.

He also had a notable influence on Bhagat Singh.^[39] Singh, after finishing primary school, had joined the Dayanand Anglo Vedic Middle School, of Mohan Lal road, in Lahore.^[40] Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, on Shivratri day, 24 February 1964, wrote about Dayananda:



Dayananda Saraswati on a 1962 stamp of India

Swami Dayananda ranked highest among the makers of modern India. He had worked tirelessly for the political, religious and cultural emancipation of the country. He was guided by reason, taking Hinduism back to the Vedic foundations. He had tried to reform society with a clean sweep, which was again need today. Some of the reforms introduced in the Indian Constitution had been inspired by his teachings.^[41]

The places Dayanand visited during his life were often changed culturally as a result. Jodhpur adopted Hindi as main language, and later the present day Rajasthan did the same.^[42] Other admirers included Swami Vivekananda,^[43] Ramakrishna,^[44] Bipin Chandra Pal,^[45] Vallabhbhai Patel,^[46] Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and Romain Rolland, who regarded Dayananda as a remarkable and unique figure.^[47]

American Spiritualist Andrew Jackson Davis described Dayanand's influence on him, calling Dayanand a "Son of God", and applauding him for restoring the status of the Nation.^[48] Sten Konow, a Swedish scholar noted that Dayanand revived the history of India.^[49]

Others who were notably influenced by him include Ninian Smart, and Benjamin Walker.^[50]

Works

Dayananda Saraswati wrote more than 60 works in all, including a 16 volume explanation of the six Vedangas, an incomplete commentary on the Ashtadhyayi (Panini's grammar), several small tracts on ethics and morality, Vedic rituals and sacraments, and a piece on the analysis of rival doctrines (such as Advaita Vedanta, Islam and Christianity). Some of his major works include the Satyarth Prakash, Satyarth Bhumika, Sanskarvidhi, Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhumika, Rigved Bhashyam (up to 7/61/2) and Yajurved Bhashyam. The Paropakarini Sabha located in the Indian city of Ajmer was founded by Saraswati to publish and preach his works and Vedic texts. He was also a socio religious reformer lived in 19th century.(India)

Complete list of works

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Sandhya (Unavailable) (1863) | 1. Vedang Prakash (Set of 16 Books) | 1. Gautam Ahilya ki katha (Unavailable) (1879) |
| 2. Bhagwat Khandnam OR Paakhand Khandan OR Vaishnavmat Khandan (1866) ^[51] | 1. Varnoccharan Shiksha (1879) | 2. Bhrantinivaran (1880) |
| 3. Advaitmat Khandan | 2. Sanskrit Vakyaprabodhini (1879) | 3. Bhrmocchedan (1880) |
| 4. Panchmahayajya Vidhi (1874 & 1877) | 3. VyavaharBhanu (1879) | 4. AnuBhrmocchedan (1880) |
| 5. Satyarth Prakash (1875 & 1884) | 4. Sandhi Vishay | 5. GokarunaNidhi (1880) |
| 6. VedantiDhwant Nivaran (1875) | 5. Naamik | 6. Chaturved Vishay Suchi (1971) |
| 7. Vedviruddh mat Khandan OR Vallabhacharya mat Khandan (1875) | 6. Kaarak | 7. Gadarbh Taapni Upnishad (As per Babu Devendranath Mukhopadhyay) (Unavailable) |
| 8. ShikshaPatri Dhwant Nivaran OR SwamiNarayan mat Khandan (1875) | 7. Saamaasik | 8. Hugli Shastrarth tatha Pratima Pujan Vichar (1873) |
| 9. VedBhashyam Namune ka PRATHAM Ank (1875) | 8. Taddhit | 9. Jaalandhar Shastrarth (1877) |
| | 9. Avyayaarth | 10. Satyasatya Vivek (Bareily Shastrarth) (1879) |
| | 10. Aakhyatik | 11. Satyadharm Vichar (Mela Chandapur) (1880) |
| | 11. Sauvar | 12. Kashi Shastrarth (1880) Note:- For other miscellaneous Shastrarth please read 1. <i>Dayanand Shastrarth</i> |
| | 12. PaariBhaasik | |
| | 13. Dhatupath | |

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|---|-----------------------|---|
| 10. VedBhashyam Namune ka DWITIYA Ank (1876) | 14. Ganpaath | <i>Sangrah</i> published by Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, Delhi and 2. <i>Rishi Dayanand ke Shastrarth evam Pravachan</i> published by Ramlal Kapoor Trust Sonipat (Haryana). |
| 11. Aryabhivinaya (Incomplete) (1876) | 15. <u>Unaadikosh</u> | |
| 12. Sanskarvidhi (1877 & 1884) | 16. Nighantu | 13. Arya Samaj ke Niyam aur Upniyam (30 November 1874) |
| 13. AaryoddeshyaRatnaMaala (1877) | | 14. Updesh Manjari (Puna Pravachan) (4 July 1875) (Please see point 2 of note for some more Pravachan) |
| 14. RigvedAadibBhasyaBhumika (1878) | | 15. Swami Dayanand dwara swakathit Janm Charitra (During Puna pravachan) (4 August 1875) |
| 15. Rigved Bhashyam (7/61/1,2 only) (Incomplete) (1877 to 1899) | | 16. Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati Jivan Charitra Photo Gallery ^[52] |
| 16. Yajurved Bhashyam (Complete) (1878 to 1889) | | 17. Swami Dayanand dwara swakathit Janm Charitra, for the Theosophist Society's monthly Journal: Nov & 1 Dec |
| 17. Asthadhyayi Bhashya (2 Parts) (Incomplete) (1878 to 1879) | | 18. Rishi Dayanand ke Patra aur Vigyapan |

See also

- Cow protection movement
- List of Hindu gurus and saints
- Dayananda Saraswati (Arsha Vidya)

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