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DURBAN

Thillayvel Naidoo

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To

My Parents

Brothers and Sisters

whose love and encouragement

made this work possible.

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1. SUBJECT OF STUDY

A study of the history of Hinduism in India reveals ironically its strange indifference to history. Hindu religious thought seems to have taken little account of the need for historical and social development. The establishment of Muslim-Moghal and later Christian-British rule in Hindustan seems therefore to have become possible because of Hindu indifference, firstly to socio-political ideals and secondly to religio-philosophical structures. Among the vast number of other debilitating weaknesses inherent within it, were also caste prejudices, religious superstition, innumerable social evils and above all, the singular lack of cohesive religiously inspired national and even cultural ideals. This obvious degeneration of Indian society typified by mass poverty and social and religious corruption made profound impacts upon people like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Dayanand Sarasvathi. Swami Dayananda believed that India had degenerated primarily because of her neglect of Vedic teachings and codes of conduct such as those inspired by the laws of Manu. His singular aim thus became the re-establishment and rejuvenation of Hinduism through the Vedic religion. His work, Satyārtha Prakash, in which he dealt critically with post-Mahabharata ramifications of Hinduism and other faiths like Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity is a comprehensive study. It was subsequently inevitable that his thrust against other religions had to be directed chiefly against Islam and Christianity because of the aggressive intrusions of these faiths into Hindu society. The opponents he faced within Hinduism itself were however at times even more formidable. Firstly, there were the pandits who exploited people's beliefs in superstition and idolatry, and their advocating many practices like child marriage and enforced widowhood. Secondly, there were the brahmins and sadhus whose pecuniary wants added to the ensuing confusion and worsening degeneration. To consolidate his work

Swami/.....

Swami Dayananda formed a movement known as the Arya Samaj (the "Society of Noble People"). The first centre of this institution was set up in Bombay in April 1875. His objective in founding the Samaj was to restructure Hindu society by eliminating social evils and re-introducing higher religious values among the people through numerous codes of behaviour. He stressed avoidance of rituals and theological complexities and in pursuit of his ideals he launched an action programme aimed at religious, social and educational reform. This eventually culminated in the political emancipation the Indian people achieved later.

He based religious reform on the bedrock of the Vedas which, he was convinced, alone held the key to arresting the decay into which Hinduism and Hindu culture had fallen. In the social field he laid stress on the eradication of practices such as idolatry, the caste system, untouchability, child marriage, widow remarriage and re-admission to Hinduism of those who had converted to other faiths. These he believed had deflected Hinduism from its basic objectives. The Shuddhi movement started by him was one of the most revolutionary movements ever initiated within Hinduism, and which later had historic significance for Hindu culture as a whole. For many centuries Hindus had denied admission into their fold members of other faiths, including those that had been drawn away from Hinduism and wished again to reconvert. The impact of conversion to other faiths had however made him realise that unless Hindus opened their doors to people of other faiths, Hinduism itself stood mortally endangered. The need for winning back to its fold Hindus who had been converted to Islam and Christianity was therefore an objective of singular anguish.

Politically, Swami Dayananda contended in 1875 that foreign rule was the main cause of India's degradation and poverty. He was therefore convinced that swaraj (home rule) was the only remedy for it and so propagated the concept of swadeshi (the purchase and use only of goods made in India). His call for swaraj was a powerful motivating force for the Arya Samajis

to/.....

to join the national freedom struggle. However, Swami Dayananda will principally be remembered as an outstanding religious reformer. It was therefore natural that his followers, especially after the attainment of independence in 1947, paid particular attention to the spread of the Vedic religion as he taught it.

The Arya Samaj movement, described sometimes by its more enthusiastic members as a world movement for religious reform, was formed in Bombay on the 10 April 1875¹. Meeting under the direction of Swami Dayananda, a group of men deeply dedicated to the Arya Samaj cause considered their objectives of spiritual and social improvement, among all the peoples that made up Hindu society, a matter of life sacrificing commitment. The founder of Arya Samaj was a preacher of Vedic Dharma, and so he believed had to adhere to Vedic ideals. The formation of the Arya Samaj movement was the culmination of twelve years of preaching and preparation. His decision to form the organisation resulted in it becoming a world wide Hindu movement. Its impact upon South African Hinduism has been felt with profound force and its growing influence continues to change many modes of worship and belief found within the faith in this country.

The writer has chosen as his object of study the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa, spearheaded by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa. The Arya Samaj is without doubt one of the most important religious movements to have been started in India. Its import into South Africa has had some influence upon Hindu religious practices in this country. The movement is however still in its infancy and confined largely to Natal. It has some forty-three affiliated units but affects the lives of many thousands of people. This is however not intended to suggest that all Hindus in South Africa or even the majority have come under its influence. This thesis does however suggest that a very positive influence has been spread among South African Hindus and engenders among them more enlightened approaches to religious practice.

2. AIM OF STUDY

The essential task in this study is:

Firstly, to examine the theological basis of the teachings propounded by Swami Dayananda and supported by the establishment and growth of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa.

Secondly, to attempt to determine how these teachings are purposefully applied to influence Hinduism in South Africa.

The study will naturally take account of the cultural structure in which the Arya Samaj functions and the goals which provide the devotional and aspirational frames of reference within the super-ordinate meaningfulness of the system formulated by Swami Dayananda and other preceptors within the movement.

The basic question involved in the study concerns the nature of the empirical basis upon which elements within the system operate. While it is not intended to follow a cross-sectional approach as Hare² recommends, the study focusses on the cultural structure comprising goals and the aspirational frame of reference within the organismic structure per se. Institutional norms have been introduced and these seek to regularise acceptable modes of aspiration towards those goals and values that systematise organic patterns of belief. The dynamic process of operation conceptualises the growth of the structure that has its roots in holy scripture. For Dayananda these roots lie in Revelation. Talcot Parsons'³ theory is that processes of socialisation and social control emanate from shared value systems as a means of functional necessity. Such necessity is therefore viewed within the context of the struggle for existence while a cultural basis enhances ultimate values that conform to the norms historicised by revelation.

Max/.....

Max Weber⁴ saw religious ideas as the basis for religious action and ultimate values. These have been progressively formulated in the Samaj context as a new "world-meaning". The Arya Samaj forms the focus of attention in this study. Its postulates generate a religious meaning that conforms to the ultimate values it describes. The study attempts to understand how religious values are conceived and how responses to non-empirical concepts formulate the goals and approaches to those goals in addition to the integration of religious values that so develop.

3. METHODS OF APPROACH

The method of research and study employed proceeds along a special course of development through specific encounters with the literature, the organisation itself both in India and South Africa and more especially its members and religious and other services.

The writer apart from his position on the staff of the University of Durban-Westville where he lectures on Hinduism is also closely associated with the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, a national organisation representing every aspect of the cultural, religious and educational interests of the Hindu community of South Africa. Because the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is an affiliate organisation within the Hindu Maha Sabha his association with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and some of its members is very cordial. He therefore enjoys a measure of confidence which has made discussion on many matters of relevance easy and educative. Discussion on all the concepts, modes of worship and religious beliefs obtaining within the Arya Samaj was at all times friendly and informative. Because the writer is known to its members as a keen student of Hindu life and thought, access to the working stresses and strains resulting from theological innovations and administrative procedures has been unhindered.

The/.....

The approach has been that of a participant-observer in all Arya Samaj functions that the writer has had the opportunity of attending in South Africa and India. This has resulted in the writer being accepted within the movement as a participating member, not however strictly sought or solicited. The position was always stated to people concerned that participation in functions of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was necessary for the purpose of the study. This enabled the writer to maintain sufficient distance for objective observation and examination of the practices in relation to the theological position and beliefs of participating members. Understandably there was encounter with different degrees of understanding, honesty and sincerity of approach underlined by the fact that religious convictions were volatile and fluid and members displayed varying degrees of appreciation of theological concepts. This gave rise to several difficulties, aggravated by the fact that serious study of Arya Samaj principles and formulation of constructive ideas on many facets of life was usually stifled. Discussion had necessarily to follow a hampered course. These were however eventually minimised with the help of constructive suggestions offered by many associates and friends. In time the study became pleasurable and an amicable relationship always enhanced smooth and constructive study and investigation.

4. LITERARY SOURCES

The bulk of the literary sources consulted during the course of the study was produced in India.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, largely through its own subsidiary organisation, the Veda Niketan has been responsible for a few publications of its own. These were however very few and very inadequate for this particular study. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has produced numerous pamphlets on the occasion of various festivals. Among these were also the celebration of

special/.....

special occasions such as the "Silver" and "Golden" Jubilees of its existence for which souvenir brochures were produced. The rest of the material however appeared in the form of official books produced by scholars in India and occasional newspaper and magazine articles forming supportive resources.

5. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, since its establishment in 1925 has built several institutions housed in various buildings in many parts of Southern Natal. This thesis records visits to these or at least the most important of these centres. Visits to the institutions in India were conducted with the intention of investigating the quality of practice adhered to in South Africa measured against Indian directives. It was possible during the visit to India to visit the Arya Samaj headquarters in New Delhi, the Gurukul Kangri near Haridwar, the institution in Bombay where the movement had its birth and a few of the other institutions associated with the larger movement in that country. It was therefore possible to see at first hand the inner workings of the entire organisation in India and above all to gain a clear insight into the real workings of the organisation in South Africa. It was therefore possible to establish the precise nature of the list provided by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in the Arya Samaj movement worldwide. It was for example possible to establish that the link, although official is not formal, thus giving the South African institution much freedom and laxity to pursue its goals at a pace allowed by local factors. Official rules and regulations have therefore been reduced to a minimum and control by the mother institution is correspondingly minimal. The inner workings of the organisation were studied with care under various circumstances.

6. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

The writer has had the opportunity of interviewing two groups of people within the Arya Samaj movement and one group of people outside it. In this way it was possible to gauge opposing shades of view. In the section entitled "Reception and Dialogue" in the fourth chapter of this thesis a description is given of the arguments against many of the teachings of the Arya Samaj. This helped to formulate thinking in the wider sphere of the Hindu community. The persons interviewed in South Africa were subjected to case studies as interviews in each case were prolonged and deliberately tutored to constitute a kind of panel for dialogue and response not only on the movement per se but also on Arya Samaj principles generally. Members therefore had the opportunity of discussing frankly their beliefs with the result that elucidation of problems was clear, invigorating and beneficial. The South African interviews were conducted at a somewhat leisurely pace in order to encourage reflective response. In India the interviews had necessarily to be short and deliberate. The writer spent some time there studying the Arya Samaj movement in as much depth as was possible in the short time available. He concentrated on gathering the most informative material on the Arya Samaj and later scrutinised this in South Africa.

The writer had the good fortune to interview people in four main centres of South Africa. These were Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. Six of the interviewees were ex-students of the Arya Samaj Gurukuls in Navsari, Baroda and Haridwar. Several people in the Gujarati speaking community who were inspired by Arya Samaj ideals chose to send their sons and daughters to India to receive primary and secondary school education there. Interviews with these students were very elucidating and added considerably to the weight of this study.

Other/.....

Other interviews were no less stimulating.

The effect of this study is seen in Arya Samajists appreciating the enormous challenges that face their theology in South Africa. One can only hope that wherever the changes introduced in society have beneficial effects these effects will be heightened for those affected by them.

7. CONCLUSION

In concluding this introduction to the study, attention is drawn to the way in which the study progressed. The second chapter has of necessity to be expository and so to reflect on the most important of biographical details on the life of Swami Dayananda which form the basis upon which he formulated his views for the formation of the Arya Samaj movement. Dayananda had therefore to indicate clearly his own understanding of religion and its true function and purpose for man and then to formulate a programme of action for the social and cultural upliftment of his people. Environmental influences were as strong as socio-political and historical influences to say nothing of theological ones.

Social change, the process of development within the social system followed by the Hindu community, is seen to be generated within a homeostatic structural-cultural balance. Shifts within the structure of interaction appear to be sufficiently powerful to be the cause of the modifications intended through purposeful motivation. The realignment in tendencies appears to all intents and purposes to be a favourable reassertion of the principles that initiated the first shift. The effect upon Hindu society is in the ultimate analysis not only reflective of its capacity for innovation and structural change but more deeply of its reassertion of structural shifts that promote the growth and development of higher motives and values.

A/.....

A certain poignancy becomes evident in the situation now prevalent with leaders in the movement both in South Africa and elsewhere facing crucial decisions of far reaching theological value. The writer, while sympathising with those who are fated to carry the burden of soul-searching for the future growth of this movement is also appreciative of the value this study will ultimately have for the movement as a whole. He therefore would deem it a great honour should this study succeed in contributing to the process of growth and spiritual development that the Arya Samaj movement in particular and through it Hindu theology in general is experiencing.

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SECTION TWO

SWAMI DAYANANDA AND THE INDIAN SITUATION

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2.3.2 Rig Veda Bhumika

2.3.3 The Panchamahar Yajurvedhi

2.3.4 The Sanskar Vidh

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3. Muslim and Christian Influences

SWAMI DAYANANDA AND THE INDIAN SITUATION

PREAMBLE

We begin our study with an analysis of the roots from which germinated the ideas for the Arya Samaj movement. The seeds of religious encounter were contained in Swami Dayananda's own life's experience which formed the central pivot around which his spiritual growth revolved. This was followed by his encounter with the scriptures of Hinduism, the Vedas, which he brought to life again after their confinement to the dim obscurity to which they had been relegated by Indian negligence.

It is out of necessity therefore that we begin with an investigation into the biographical details that bore so much importance for the movement. For this reason we shall encounter throughout our study not only the theological implications of the teachings but also their strong influence upon the sociological derivatives upon which Swami Dayananda founded so much of his attention. Reinhold Niebuhr's¹ contention that religion is continually renewed out of the incongruous situation of man is affirmed in what we encounter in the experience of disorder and incoherence that characterises the initial impact upon Dayananda's great mind.

Swami Dayananda's approach has obviously functional overtones. To be sure his difficulties mounted within this system with the theological demands of his approach forcing him to his own evaluative stance. For him religion at its simplest was seen as a system of beliefs and practices and these he placed within the control of human struggle with the ultimate problems of life.

Joachim Wach² holds that religion is characterized by at least three universal expressions: the theoretical, constituting its system of beliefs, the practical, in which a system of worship evolves, and the sociological, in which social relationships are enhanced. Arya Samajic approaches were able to provide the basic elements and religious tendencies which clearly coincide with Wach's definition. Although the first of these

expressions/.....

expressions, the system of beliefs, fall naturally into the category Dayananda appeared to have considered the heart of religion, ethnological evidence seems to suggest that religion as worship and religion as a system of social relationships may be basic with belief coming in in a supportive role to give meaning and coherence to worship emerging from felt needs.

Following on Dayananda's functional approach our definition has to consider not the nature of the beliefs within the movement, but the nature of the approaches to those beliefs. Justification for this arises, despite the diversity of beliefs even within a single homogeneous system, from the assumption that the many forms represent different attempts to deal with the same problem. Throughout our study we are reminded of the implications of the revolution in religious behaviour influencing a new nationalism. Indian society was clearly a society whose traditional religion was losing some of its appeal. So the new faith, its symbols, worshipful acts and the organisation had to be recast into that which substituted the nationalization of religion for a reformed religionization of the nation.



SECTION TWO

CHAPTER 1

LIFE OF SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASVATHI (1825 - 1883)

Swami Dayananda was born at Tankara in the Indian province of Gujerat in 1825³. His education commenced when he was five years old. When he reached the age of eight, he was invested with the sacred thread (Yajnopavita Sanskar) as was customary for a Brahmin child whereby he was initiated into the Sandhya and Upasana sacraments⁴. It was soon after this that his spiritual calling became fully manifest and he began to reveal strong tendencies of adoration of Lord Shiva. At the age of ten he took to observing rigorous fasts, listening to Kathas (stories) and keeping long vigils during many nights of prayer. He was a precocious student and learning came easily to him. At the age of fourteen he had committed to memory the whole of the Yajur Veda Samhita, some portions of the remaining three Vedas and some minor works of Sanskrit grammar. He however understood very little of what he could repeat.

It was at this age too that he received the first great shock that was to make such a deep impression upon him and revolutionised his entire approach to spiritual matters.⁵ As a young person, he was deeply imbued with the idea of God's Revelation. Spiritual discipline was however necessary and for a Saivite family the fast and ceremonial vigil over the festival of Sivaratri was one of the most austere. The entire night is observed as a night of prayer and the deity in the temple is worshipped in four stages. One of the rules of the festival is that the devotee who observes the fast must remain awake the whole night as otherwise the observance would be meaningless. The first quarter of the night (marking the first part) passed off well; during the second stage the proceedings became less animated but the majority of the people continued with the rite. During the third quarter most of the devotees were unable to resist sleep.

It/.....

It was however during the night when virtually all the other devotees, including the priests were unable to maintain the vigil and fell asleep that Dayananda had the first of several deeply disturbing experiences. A mouse creeping out of its hole began to take liberties with the image of Shiva and to help itself to the food offerings which had been brought by the worshippers. For many moments the boy watched in horror as the little creature pranced from food item to food item. He sat stupefied.

The boy Moolshankar thought long and intently over the incident, as the seriousness of it made a traumatic impact upon him. So deeply was he affected by it that he resolved, subsequent to so many deeply searching questions that raced through his precocious mind, to ponder over many of the religious problems he knew others of his temperament faced. It was then that the future religious leader received his call from God in which he was exhorted to study the Vedas and be spiritually enriched in the knowledge and wisdom of those scriptures. The call directed him to a commitment of study and religious discipline which would later be followed by his leading many of his countrymen to a new direction in religious thinking. "Dayananda's soul had heard the words and took in the inspiration in a vague, half-conscious fashion to be realised and worked out in the gradually increasing enlightenment of later years."⁶

For Dayananda the torment was deep and agonising. His dialogue with his father, a deeply committed Saivite Brahmin, failed to resolve his problem. The solution offered was at best, for him, a travesty of even the simplest reasoning on such matters. If a mouse could take such liberties with a revered image of the Lord, how does He offer protection to Himself, let alone to others? It appeared to him utterly impossible to reach the living omnipotent Lord through the medium of an ideal made of stone. Because his faith in idol-worship had been badly shaken, he resolved to search out and if possible meet God face to face.

He/.....

He thus devoted himself to his studies, determined to meet through pure reason many of the problems he faced in interpreting correctly the true meaning of holy scripture.⁷

It was two years later that Dayananda was to receive the second great shock of his life that was to leave him stupefied with remorse. His young sister died one night after a very short and sudden illness. The incident brought home to him the cold callousness of death and his resolve became one of adamant search for Truth in which the meaning of life and so death could become clear to him.

He resisted all thoughts of marriage and was able, after much discussion with his parents, to delay this for a long time. However after a year he was informed of their intention to prepare for his wedding, against which he had much personal resolve. He removed himself to another village as a temporary solution in the hope that the time could be usefully spent in studies. His decision never to marry was however conveyed to his parents who immediately disregarded his wishes and prepared for his wedding. Moolshankar's pre-occupation with spiritual matters forced him into a strong desire to forego entry into grahastha-ashrama, the householder's station in life. His admiration and love for many great teachers of earlier years forced him to resolve against marriage, hoping thereby to follow in the paths of religious investigation they took. He chose to leave home, perhaps never to return.

During the flight from home he arrived at the home of a distinguished student of scripture named Lala Bhagat who had as permanent guests numerous ochre-clad students who had dedicated themselves to a religious life. One of the brahmacharins conferred upon him the privilege of the Order to which they belonged and named him Shuddha-Chaitanya (Pure Minded). His obvious flair for leading the life of a renunciate by wearing the ochre robe and carrying a beggar's gourd enabled him to join the band of monks and dedicate himself to study and religious discipline. He was however found by his father who had set out

after/.....

after him. His second attempt at leaving home forced him to wander incognito until he was safely out of the reach of his parents.

He had a strong desire to become a monk. With the assistance of a learned pandit in the district, he persuaded the Swami Purnananda Sarasvathi to initiate him into the holy order of Sanyasa. The important ceremony took place and soon the young Moolshankar, alias Shuddha Chaitanya, became the monk renunciate Swami Dayananda of the Sarasvathi Order in his twenty-fourth year. A life of total independence, dedication and study followed which later enabled him to undergo rigorous religious disciplines and then to preach the message of the Vedas to millions of his own countrymen.

His wonderings thereafter became more purposeful than they had been till then. He met Swami Yogananda and studied with him all aspects of Yoga Philosophy and its disciplines. He later went to Krishna Shastri at Cinor and continued his studies of Sanskrit grammar. He later joined another Pandit with whom he continued his studies of the Vedas. He joined two yogis named Jwalananda Puri and Shivananda Giri to continue his studies of Yoga.⁸ He always expressed his gratitude to these two teachers for all he had learnt from them. He continued his wonderings and meetings with many of the wise and competent teachers in several parts of the country from Mount Abu to Rishikesh and Haridwar. He also learnt something about the Tantras, a branch of learning that fell into disrepute because of the nature of its practices. His travels in the country brought him to the famous pilgrim centres of Joshimath and Badrinarayan. His disappointment at not meeting any learned monks drove him further on in his search. At this time his greatest desire was to associate with all the learned men he could find for the purposes of studying as much as he could from all of them. During these travels however he had to endure many hardships. There was little food to be had, his clothes were scanty and there seldom was any comfortable place he could

find/.....

find for rest or lodging. There were times when he was forced to eat ice to stave off thirst and hunger. When attempting to cross the icy waters of the Alakananda River filled as it was with rocks and stones he encountered many difficulties. "His feet were wounded and bleeding and utterly dismembered with cold and he felt like one in a state of stupefaction."⁹

He continued his journey with renewed earnestness. Despite the severity of his plans and difficulties his search continued. This part of his wanderings as a Parivrajaka (wandering monk) made him study and practice austerities for the sake of preparing himself for the great tasks that lay ahead. His wanderings led him to many of the remote areas of the country. On one occasion he came across a corpse being carried along by a strong current of a river. Dayananda had with him several books on physiology and anatomy. He chose to cut up the corpse and to examine it in every detail. Needless to say his interest in the subject was considerably enhanced.

In 1856 Swami Dayananda was still walking the country from village to village visiting other holy cities and pilgrim centres, meeting with and talking to many students of Vedic learning. It was however in 1859 that one of the more momentous occasions of his life occurred. It was at Mathura that Swami Dayananda met the man who was to make a profound contribution to his spiritual and intellectual development. Dayananda was accepted as a student by Swami Virajananda and a long and close association between the two religious scientists commenced. At the time of their meeting there was great famine in the area, which was felt with acute tribulation by many people. It was however his firm resolve to dedicate his life to study in the midst of these hardships that won the hearts of his Guru and several friends in the area who agreed to help him in every possible way.¹⁰

Few men toiled and laboured and sacrificed as Dayananda did.¹¹

Every/.....

Every act of his mind and will became from then on a legacy to the belief that only the purest and most sublime of Vedic teachings had to become the basis, the very soul of spiritual endeavour in his native land. The first five years of his ministry (1863 - 1868) as teacher and reformer were somewhat uneventful. Much of this time was spent in travelling around India visiting centres of pilgrimage and more especially meeting students and scholars well-versed in the various branches of Indian philosophical and religious literature. The Swami engaged in numerous discussions and disputations with people in every city, town and village to which he went. In each of these discussions he levelled considerable criticism against many of the popular notions held by the people. He was particularly vociferous in his criticism of the Srimad Bhagavatam, a popular Purana which he regarded as immoral.¹² During this time he also met with several British students and ministers of religion with whom he discussed at length several contentious matters that were popular among people at the time.

A durbar was held in Agra in November 1866 where he arrived with five friends and fellow students (vidyarthi) anxious to spread his teachings and to engage in dialogue with others in the hope of convincing them of new ideas and approaches to religious matters. It was however at the Kumbha Fair that Swami Dayananda encountered one of the saddest incidents in his experience. He had gone there with great hopes and had put all his energy into the work that had carried him thither but for all that, the fair left his spirits weighed down and depressed. So much idolatry and even more debasing adoration of material possessions. He was deeply hurt at the sight of the general lust after material wealth and pleasure that he saw all around him. He grew more deeply affected at the thought that very much the same attitude pervaded the thinking and behaviour of a great many other people in the rest of India. His doubts increased as he believed that India was leagued against herself and bent on self-destruction. It was then

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that he expressed moments of great despair; but instead of wilting under the weight of these burdens he rose with firm resolve to continue. "All that I need," he said, "is more force, moral and spiritual force, which will come through spiritual discipline."¹³

He was well aware of the value of winning young men over to the Truth as he understood it. This enthusiasm however attracted many young men who proved to be just villains and mischief makers who made several attempts on his life. On more than one occasion he was given poison in one form or other. When he was able to discover this in time he saved himself by resort to adequate measures of medication and cure. He was however generally all forgiving and even those who on many occasions chose to heap contempt upon him were usually won over by love and became some of his closest friends. The admiration they had for him came as a result of his own austere living and frugal habits. For example, he sought, even on extremely cold nights no better bed than a heap of straw or paddy husks. Defying sickness of every kind he lived on meagre resources dedicated to the task he had taken upon himself: that of spreading Vedic truth in its purest form.

It was in 1868 that Swami Dayananda resolved to bring order into his work and to prepare for the establishment of educational institutions through which his message could be put to practical effect. He concluded that schools had to be established whereby religious norms could be propagated. His appeal to friends and associates and the public at large drew response from several quarters. One enthusiastic supporter was Panni Lal Seth who was at the time working on the construction of a Shivalaya (Shiva Temple) and decided immediately to incorporate into it a patshala (school). This was later followed by the establishment of another patshala two years later at Kasganj and a third at Merzapur in the same year. The fourth was established at Chhalesar at the request of Thakur Singh. A characteristic of all the patshalas established by the Swami was that for the first time some order was introduced into this general scheme of learning and each student possessed some knowledge of the

general aims of study at these institutions. The rules that were enforced were very strictly followed and some measure of order was maintained for Vedic study. However the success of these schools was never clearly evident during their life time. The Swami had little alternative but to close them down after a brief spell of existence, having admitted to failure in achieving his original aims.¹⁴

Swami Dayananda's dedication continued unabated in the years following the closure of the schools. He embarked upon a new programme of teaching and preaching in which one of the main concerns was with condemning old superstitious practices, more particularly implicit belief in the Bhagavat. It is somewhat ironical that an Indian Swami like Dayananda should have held such deep resentment for such a work while as many Hindus saw in it the very foundations of their religious existence.

Aldous Huxley says of the work: "It expresses the essence of Indian religion almost as forcefully as does the Bhagavat Gita." Christopher Isherwood considers it "one of the great religious classics of the world."¹⁵

The Arya Samaj movement as a whole today faces the onerous task of having to explain its rejection of this work as scripture, while a modern Hindu religious movement known worldwide for its buoyant propagation of the message of Sri Krishna uses the very Bhagavatam as its canonical Scripture.¹⁶ Translations of this work now run into several volumes while abridged versions are sold in many countries around the world and in several Indian and European languages.

From Garghya Ghat the Swami proceeded to the town of Swaran where another debate was held and he succeeded in converting several people of the Chakrankit Faith to the Vedic religion. His disputations with learned pundits always ended in victory for him. Swami Dayananda repudiated idolatry on the authority of the Vedas and exposed the Bhagavat to ridicule. Other

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learned pundits were rather amazed at his attitude because few people before him had ever dared to oppose the teachings of the Puranas, a set of scriptures that were so popular in India for so many centuries. His exhortations led people to consign shaligrams, kanthis and tilaks to rivers thus forcing people to dispense with so-called aids to spiritual growth and taking recourse to intelligent study and practice of religious discipline. His stay at Swaran for six months was an important feature of his travels and teaching at this time. He taught people to recite the Gayatri and to use its recitation as the basis of meditation.

No doubt the Swami faced considerable opposition from orthodoxy, but his resolute and fearless stand brought him many admirers. At a fair in Kakara some people, sympathetic to his message sought his favour to show some leniency towards idol worship. He was however adamant: "The things of the world which yield pleasure to you, have no charm for me. To me there is pleasure in the contemplation and adoration of God alone and in carrying out His commandments. I shall work with the one, sole object of disseminating true Vedic knowledge."¹⁷ His open challenge to anyone to deny that the ancient religion of the Aryans was the purest and noblest as taught in the Vedas went unheeded and his popularity and success began slowly to make an impression upon the society he chose to serve, transform and above all love with such dedication.¹⁸

Swami Dayananda's resolute stand against idolatry was interpreted by some as overenthusiastic zeal making far too great an impact upon a religious tradition that went back many centuries. He naturally aroused the ire of people like Pandit Siri Gopal and others of Farrukabad who reverted to the use of scripture to refute the stand taken by him.

Possibly the most vehement criticism that could be levelled against Swami Dayananda is that he appeared far too uncompromising against his opponents. His obvious repugnance for "idol-worship" as he understood the practice, naturally aroused the indignation

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of many people and the more erstwhile among them became very resentful of his open hostility towards it. His obvious failure to adopt a different strategy involving tact through constructive influence failed to earn him the following he could possibly have got otherwise.

His anxiety to go from village to village and town to town in northern India, at the pace he employed evidenced itself in his failure to reap greater rewards for the movement. His haste betrayed his weakness for attempting too much too quickly with the result that more time was lost in opposing people and being opposed by those who had little real interest in reforming themselves anyhow when he could have used his time by winning friends and maintaining their support.

Unlike Swami Vivekananda who adopted a totally different stance that involved patient study, travel throughout the country meeting people and so winning friends and laying proper foundations for the enormous tasks he had, Swami Dayananda was openly hostile to people in many situations and more often gave evidence of adopting totally uncompromising attitudes. His open and frank claims and decisions as to his purpose often left him open to attack. It seems more likely that had his approach been gentle with first winning the confidence of friends and supporters, his achievement would almost certainly have travelled a more successful course of growth and influence.

The Shastrarth held at Kanpur was one of the most momentous meetings ever held by him.¹⁹ It attracted many thousands of people. The subject of discussion concerned idolatry and as was expected Pandit Halдар Ojha engaged him in debate. The upshot of the argument by the Swami was that the Vedas never supported idol worship as such. The pandit's response was: "If the Vedas do not enjoin idol worship where do they condemn it?" There is no evidence to suggest that the Swami had any spontaneous rejoinder to this.

The Swami's zeal however in talking to people and writing at length in the form of newspaper articles and little pamphlets

received considerable support. Though at first opposition to his ideas appeared quite formidable he was able to penetrate through to large groups of people and in time signs of success became more discernible. The editorial in a local newspaper of Sho'la-i Toor in July 1869 spoke highly of the Swami's influence and insight; and the religious rejuvenation he was able to invoke among many communities.²⁰

The twenty-third day of October 1869 was the day that Kashi had to face the onslaught of one of India's great sons of sincere resolve. The Swami's fearless resolution to oppose idolatry in any form aroused the wrath of many learned pandits including the Maharaja of Kashi who was disposed to keeping peace and ensuring that discussions were kept within the limits of reasonable rapport. The Kashi Shastrarth unlike the other Shastrarths held in other parts of the country was unique in that the pandits chose to ascertain the source of the information on which Swami Dayananda based all his contentions. It was also unique because Swami Dayananda encountered some of India's most learned pandits and other scholars like Swami Vishudananda who proved to be a formidable opponent. Swami Dayananda's views were not easily acceptable to people. While it appeared that he was deeply concerned about the form of worship and religious affiliation accepted by the people, he could do very little to convince them of the need for reform and change. His great objectives lay in transforming Hindu society to a position where it no longer accepted several schools of philosophy, the Puranas, caste and idolatry. His single aim was that Hindus would revert "back to the Vedas," when only one God would be adored, the Vedas studied and the sacrifice of homa be performed for the benefit of all irrespective of caste or station in life.²¹

In the 1860's the Brahmo Samaj was at the height of its power. Many of its leading members took a keen interest in Swami Dayananda in the hope that they might be able to persuade him to join their movement. In the discussion that took place between them they discovered some irreconcilable differences of viewpoint on several matters. His uncompromising stand on the authority of the Vedas and several other issues related

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to the importance of some scriptural texts naturally brought much disagreement with the Brahmos. His love for Sanskrit soon proved to be somewhat burdensome as many of his associates prepared to speak in Hindi and Bengalee. His stay however proved interesting and discussion often resulted in very valuable exchanges of ideas. His meeting with Sri Ramakrishna was brief and no major exchange of ideas occurred between them.²² His attempt to establish Vedic schools proved futile and he left Calcutta in April 1873.

His arrival in Bihar was marked by the usual interest aroused among large groups of people. No doubt many people displayed much sympathy for his work and ideas but this was always overshadowed by opposition from Pandits who vehemently held fast to views that differed radically from his. The discussions on caste and idolatry were again characterised by vehemence, vituperation and calumny. Most hurled abuse at him and it always became obvious that the Swami had to withstand insults and abuse at every turn. So deeply was he committed to his own viewpoint that wherever an opportunity arose to speak he used it at great length, sometimes in lectures lasting several hours to audiences that though moved and convinced of the quality of his reasoning, found great difficulty in suddenly having to change radically many years, in fact a lifetime of commitment to a traditional pattern of belief.

In July 1874 he found himself at Allahabad. In a discussion held in the city on one occasion he was confronted by a Shastri who wished to know why his meetings sometimes raised such commotion. The Swami's reply underlined the tasks he had set himself and proved to many his firm conviction that a purpose had to be fulfilled. He always believed that as so many Pandits promulgated ideas that often emerged as trickery and deceit in the name of religion, he had come to defend the eternal principles of truth and justice and above all, introduce a measure of sanity into the religion he loved and wished so dearly to see return to its pristine form in the land of its birth.

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In September of 1883 Swami Dayananda decided to leave Jodhpur where he was staying and was heavily engaged in preaching among the people, including the Maharaja of the principality. It was on the 29th day of the month that the Swami realised during the course of the night that he was becoming very ill soon after he had drunk a glass of milk as he had always done. The pains became violent and it soon became evident that he had been poisoned. It was decided to remove him from there. He consented to going to Ajmer where doctors would have been able to administer more suitable medication than was available at Jodhpur. His arrival in Ajmere was however too late. The doctors were able to do very little for him. After several days the great Swami Dayananda passed away on Deepavali day in the October of 1883.

CHAPTER 2

SWAMI DAYANANDA'S WORK FOR SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS UPLIFTMENT

The social conditions that prevail in India today are well-known. It is described as one of the third world countries with a gross national product that once made it one of the poorest nations on earth. However much economic advances are made through rapid industrialisation, the country's social and economic difficulties dominate every segment of her national life. At the time of Swami Dayananda's birth India's social, economic, political and even religio-cultural life were clearly among the most deeply disturbing features of any nation's human and national development. Many know of the general state of degeneration to which the country had fallen and often this is ascribed to the hundreds of years of neglect through nebulousness or perhaps foreign domination that have reduced the country to near ruin in almost every sphere of her national life. While many people were aware of these conditions and were able to do very little about them, it was necessary for a man of extraordinary talent to be born, to help eradicate the scourge of neglect in ways he believed possible or necessary. One suggestion was that Swami Dayananda's was the genius necessary for a many sided regeneration of Indian life in every sphere.¹

Swami Dayananda's entire life was a dedication to the highest ideals of personal religious and so national religious integrity. His life was thus a deeply moving spiritual odyssey with almost every moment of it drawn to an undaunted yearning for expression of only the purest of spiritual ideals. The emotional disturbances at the sight of India's poverty and human degradation and above all at the almost inescapable ignorance of more enlightened approaches to religious matters were experiences reserved only for those endowed with a saintly capacity for great suffering. The work done by Swami Dayananda during his life was quite obviously the result of a total

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dedication with fanatical zeal to an ideal of lasting transformation of Indian society. His task it seems was to purge society of its rampant evils. And evils he believed had no place in a land that built her history on the bedrock of Vedic truth.

2.1 ATTACK ON IDOLATRY

As a teacher, Swami Dayananda concentrated his efforts on preaching against idolatry in every form. The force of his attacks was contained in the Shastrarths which he held in every town and village in the northern expanse of the country. Swami Dayananda reached Haridwar on the 12 March 1867.² He began his public denunciation of many of the evil practices within Hinduism by speaking out against idol worship. He was also opposed to one of the fundamental tenets of Vaishnavite religion, the belief in the Avatars of Vishnu.

It was however at Shàstràrths that he scored his greatest victories over opponents. Many instances could be cited of the discussions that the Swami engaged people in throughout his travels. His primary object during each of the Shàstràrths he took part in was to convince people of the need for a totally new approach to religion. A Shastrarth was traditionally held for the purpose of exegetical discussion and interpretation of the most important of Hindu scriptures. Swami Dayananda used Shastrarths as the means of his ministry. Thus Shastrarths were convened mainly for the purpose of refuting false claims in understanding scriptural texts; the main purpose of this being to convince others that no scriptural injunction could be found for idol worship in any form.³ Swami Dayananda held these shastrarths in many parts of the country. It is however beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all of these. We will confine ourselves to a few of the most significant ones to consider the nature of the work he undertook and the success he achieved thereby.

2.1.1 THE SHASTRARTH AT THE KUMBHA FAIR IN HARIDWAR

The primary task in this Shastrarth, although not strictly a discussion on scripture, was to make clear to all that a new force had arisen on India's religious frontier to rid the country of its ignorance, superstition and corruption. For him the descendants of heroes, warriors, philosophers, statesmen and scholars were now grovelling in the dust of irreligion deprived of political liberty and bound fast in iron chains to superstition and mental slavery which were digging into their flesh. He reminded his listeners that they were quite oblivious of the glory their forefathers had won in every field of human activity, strangers to their glorious heritage and drifting away from truth, strength and happiness. Flying a flag of his own, proclaiming liberty and freedom from falsehood and superstition, he called on his people, through his passion for moral living, to renounce false beliefs, to accept the truth of the Vedas and to cast off the chains that stunted this growth and held them bound to slavery.⁴

The Shastrarth underlined the Swami's conviction that worship of the impersonal Being was far more relevant and necessary and that all other forms of prayer were in effect a travesty of true worship.⁵ His belief arose from the fact that so often the Puranas were quoted by people for such practices as drinking, gambling, adultery, etc. and these he felt were the cause of the carnage in religious affairs that he saw everywhere.

2.1.2 THE SHASTRARTH AT FARUKABAD - MAY 1869

Whenever the Swami arrived at a town or village he invariably invited local pandits to a discussion at the Shastrarth he would convene to invoke interest among the local residents. The shastrarth at Farrukabad in May 1869 was one of the most acrimonious and bitterly contested

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discussions he engaged in. Pandit Siri Gopal of the Meerut District was known as an avowed exponent of Puranic thought and hence supported the system of worship that Swami Dayananda denounced.⁶ The Pandit's first argument arose from his belief that Puja (ritual) was required to be performed. He quoted from Manu Smriti which declared that puja was due to the Devatas (deities) and hence had to be performed. The pandit was adamant that that system of worship was indispensable for all Hindus. The Swami's contention was that puja meant honouring or showing reverence and that in the verse quoted it meant nothing more than performing Agnihotra (fire sacrifice).⁷ The discussion ended in stalemate with neither person agreeing to concede that arguments both for and against were valid or acceptable. The pandit found many arguments to support his contention that worship of stone images was a necessary part of worship. These were invariably obtained from the Puranas. In all discussions between Arya Samajists and Sanathanis the Puranas have featured prominently in support of image worship. The pandit Siri Gopal always used in support of his contentions Vedic passages that appeared to give some authority to the Puranas. On another occasion the Pandit Halдар in a debate with Swami Dayananda cited the incident from the Mahabharata in which a Bhil (tribesman) was said to have made an image of the Acharya Drona and worshipped it.⁸ Swami Dayananda's contention always rested on the need for Vedic authority for image worship and not Puranic authority. Swami Dayananda always remained unconvinced that the Puranas ever were necessary for religious study.

Swami Dayananda's views on matters of scripture and worship aroused considerable interest so he decided to prepare the minds of his listeners to his chief objective and the views he held dear. The manifesto he prepared enumerated some of his beliefs with regard to religious practice. He believed that these were some practices that tended to debase and injure people religiously.

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These had to be avoided while other practices elevated people spiritually because of their sublime truths.

The eight vices that debased people he said were:⁹

- i. All works published by common man.
- ii. The worship of stones in the belief that they represented devatas.
- iii. The belief in the various sects.
- iv. Vanmargism as taught and practised in the Tantras.
- v. The use of intoxicating drugs and liquor.
- vi. Adultery.
- vii. Fraud, conceit, lying etc.
- viii. Theft.

The virtues he believed that elevated people spiritually were: (Here quoted only in brief.)

- i. The twenty-one Shastras.
- ii. Serving the guru and study of the Vedas.
- iii. The performance of rituals like sandhya, agnihotra.
- iv. Conjugal faith and practice of moral discipline.
- v. The practice of tapas (austerities) and self-control.
- vi. Meditation and introspection; the cultivation of spiritual knowledge.
- vii. A constant effort to observe rules of religious discipline and to avoid if not conquer qualities like lust, greed, anger and other vices.
- viii. The practice of religious disciplines that would lead to Moksha.

The manifesto resulted in large numbers of people taking a keen interest in the Swami and his work. Although the Pandit Haldar was never able to quote the passages, in response to Dayananda's request he was able to rise to the

occasion with a ready response. "If the Vedas do not enjoin idol worship where do they condemn it?"

The Swami's reply was very lengthy but not convincing. Pandit Halдар did not give credence to his arguments and the two men parted company agreeing to disagree on a highly contentious matter.

2.1.3 THE SHASTRARTH AT BENARES - 1869

The Swami's first task on arrival in the city was to contact the leading pandits to arrange for a discussion on matters he considered important. Pandit Raja Ram Shastri was happy to arrange such a meeting and invited to it several other learned Pandits as well. The Maharaja of Kasi on hearing of the proposed Shastrarth agreed to direct proceedings. It was well publicised and inevitably drew very large crowds. As the city was known for its learning and the residence there of many learned pandits contributed to this, the meeting it was felt was destined to prove one of the most important ever held by the Swami.¹⁰

The debates centred around several passages from the Vedas and other scriptures Swami Dayananda found authoritative. There was no absolute agreement on all the arguments. The discussions were often interrupted by heckling and acrimony was very rife. The Tatva Bodhni of Calcutta had published in one of its weekly editions that none of the learned pandits was in a position to defeat the Swami in verbal battles on the matter.¹¹ He proved himself to be a formidable opponent, with his most important concern being idolatry in its most debased form.

This particular Shastrarth at Benares was one of the most significant he had participated in. Like so many of his debates and disputations, there was heated argument and as had happened so often they were vituperative and vitriolic in the extreme. The acrimony and animosities

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had engendered much unhappiness and the Swami had succeeded in making himself very unpopular among some people. He escaped death on several occasions but as his biography reveals his adversaries succeeded in their purpose on one fateful occasion.

2.1.4 THE SHASTRARTH AT CHANDAPUR - 1877

The Shastrarth at Chandapur was very significant because Swami Dayananda was joined in discussion by four Christian missionaries and two former Muslim scholars. The Swami's task in having the Shastrarth arranged was largely to arrive at the position in his discussion with representatives of these faiths where he would be able to assert Hindu viewpoints on matters of importance to the religious life of the people. The Shastrarth was intended to prove that with the Truth of the Vedas being a shining example to man of His glory, there was no need for such thoroughly immature practices like conversion of people from one faith to another, but more to realise what need there was for harmony between peoples and greater respect for different religions in the world. "And to achieve this it was necessary for Molvis, Missionaries and ourselves to meet in love and peace and investigate the Truth."¹²

The two day discussion was very extensive with all parties proffering many arguments and counter arguments in support of and in answer to charges. Swami Dayananda's contribution to the discussion however was significant in that there was firstly the expected pleas for sober discussion whereby it would be possible to investigate Truth and to determine which Faith was true. Secondly he said, there was to be no harbouring of thoughts of victory and defeat as that was not the objective of the Shastrarth. Its sole purpose was to help all men investigate Truth that they may spiritually benefit by it. The Swami then proceeded to present the Hindu viewpoint on a wide

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variety of philosophical arguments on the nature of God and the world.

The discussion ended with all the parties still holding rigidly to their respective viewpoints but acknowledging that Swami Dayananda was a profound scholar of Vedic truth who had laid the participants under a debt of gratitude for sharing many valuable points of discussion with them.

2.2

2.2.1 DAYANANDA'S IDEALS IN EDUCATION

Swami Dayananda's reflection on India's social condition led him to the conclusion that the educational system prevailing in the country was primarily responsible for her degradation. He had the wish therefore to institute a new educational system which would incorporate totally revolutionary ideas to help alter the social conditions prevailing. His first appeal went out to some of the prominent and wealthy citizens of Farrukabad for assistance in the launching of a programme which would help the establishment of schools in many areas. His appeal received initial support from a few people sympathetic to his cause. The first such person was Lala Panni Lal Seth who had been building a Shivalaya.¹³ He had agreed to incorporate into this building a patshala, (a primary school) and further agreed to contribute to the salary of the first pandit employed to teach new religious ideas to the students.¹⁴ Other friends came forward and offered money and other assistance to defray other expenses concerned with the running of the school. The Swami himself, a learned Sanskrit scholar undertook to initiate lessons by himself teaching the vidyarthi (young students) and to many he gave the Yajnopavit, the sacred thread by which they were accepted into religious life.

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Swami Dayananda himself knew no English, so his own education was completely indigenous, uninfluenced in any way by the system of education introduced by the British government.¹⁵ He drew his information concerning the system of education to be introduced into India by the Arya Samaj wholly from Sanskrit sources. His beliefs thus suffered no indoctrination and his fierce and often vitriolic onslaughts against any such intrusion more particularly those advocated by people like Charles Grant and other missionaries who pleaded for parliamentary assistance for Christian indoctrination, were as vociferous as they were tormented. The missionaries themselves were acutely aware that India's social conditions were due largely to the ignorance Indians themselves displayed of their need for a proper understanding of religious and cultural ideals. Hindu inadequacy in formulating principles of education based on a sound system of educational philosophy made her vulnerable to the belief in the superiority of western educational systems. The new ideas thus imparted to Indians by British missionaries gave rise to the belief among Indians themselves that Indian religious, cultural and above all educational standards were inferior.

Swami Dayananda recognised early in his career that many notions held by the Indian people about all aspects of their religious, cultural and educational standards were very shortsighted.¹⁶ He therefore emphasized the need for a totally new educational system and he spared no effort in his attempt to establish this as part of his ideal of a total religious and cultural regeneration of the Indian people. In all his travels, wanderings and discussions among the people of north India he pleaded for the establishment of Sanskrit schools and the teaching of the Vedas as part of the curriculum.¹⁷

In his work Satyārtha Prakash, Swami Dayananda lists fifty-one articles of faith which summarise his

multifarious beliefs in the goodness of man when exposed to Vedic Truth. At a conference held in Lahore in 1877 these fifty-one principles were reduced to ten basic teachings. The eighth of these principles reads:

One should promote Vidya and dispel Avidya.

The Arya Samaj bases its stand on the principle that the dissemination of knowledge and the removal of ignorance is fundamental to its cause. In order to put into effect then the educational ideas advocated by Swami Dayananda two great educational institutions came into existence to conform to the programme, then formulated. The first was the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, the very first of which was started at Lahore under the direction of Lala Hansraj. The second was the Gurukul, started under the direction of Swami Shraddhananda. The first Gurukul was established at Kangri.¹⁸ Each of these institutions had its own educational objectives which were pursued with unrelenting vigour, often in the face of many changes aroused by Muslim and Christian hostilities. Swami Shraddhananda himself was assassinated by a Muslim fanatic in 1926.

The Arya Samaj has always been aware of the importance placed by Swami Dayananda on educational objectives for young people. The decision to establish the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College (often referred to as D.A.V. Colleges) was taken after his death to commemorate his work. The funds that were necessary came from various sources and a committee of interested people brought this institution into existence. The name of Lala Hansraj was closely associated with the institution and the success attributed to it was due to his guidance and direction as a leading educationalist of his time. The first D.A.V. College came into existence at Lahore in June 1886 with Lala Hansraj as its first headmaster.¹⁹ Lahore is now in Pakistan, so at the time of partition the Arya Samaj

movement suffered grievously its loss. The school started as a secondary school but was later converted into a college making it possible for students to study in it for a B.A. degree.

The D.A.V. College was by many accounts a very successful educational institution. The most important subjects taught were Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Persian, Philosophy, Ancient and Modern History, Political Economy, Logic, Elementary Physics and Chemistry.²⁰ The number of students that passed examinations was very large and those winning prizes for exemplary work were often conspicuous as students of D.A.V. Colleges from among all students in the various states. In this way the movement developed a proud reputation for educational achievement. Several D.A.V. institutions were started in states like Punjab, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere. Their total self-reliance, meaning that no assistance was received from Government or foreign sources, helped to establish great confidence in the institution. The Arya Samaj felt singularly proud of its achievement in the field of education as a result of the growth and development of these colleges.²¹

2.2.2 THE GURUKUL MOVEMENT

Swami Dayananda's ideal in education centred mainly on the study of Vedic culture through Sanskrit. The emphasis in the D.A.V. Colleges was laid on western values hence a considerable deviation from Vedic values was discerned. In time a number of criticisms were levelled against the educational ideals developing in D.A.V. Colleges. Among these were their pre-occupation with high levels of attainment at the expense of several of the more urgent needs of educational practices in the national interest. Inevitably two rather distinct patterns of education appeared to develop when the established colleges became secular in their interests while several administrators appealed for religious interests to be served with greater zeal.

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It thus became possible for the Arya Samaj to consider the establishment of what later emerged as the most original innovation in education in India, namely the Gurukula.²² For many Indians the establishment of the Gurukul was an exciting prospect which led many people like Rabindranath Tagore and others to see in it a resumption of ancient values and ideals that returned the country to her love for the recognition of her indigenous spirit and national feeling.

The primary aim of the Gurukul system was to acquaint the students with Indian cultural life styles. Although western educational standards formed a focal point of interest, they were in effect secondary in importance.²³ It was hoped that the students of the Gurukula system could be moulded into developing a love for everything noble in Indian culture. Sanskrit had to be a first language to be followed by Hindi. Although all other subjects had to be studied, it was expected that Indian culture would receive primary attention. In this way it was hoped that students would support the idea of home rule by never supporting the government which at the time was British, thus asking students to agitate for independence and at the same time inculcating in them a love for education programmes by which India's national interests could be emphasized through the teaching of agriculture and medical services.²⁴

The Gurukul at Kangri developed considerably over a period of twenty years. From a small thatch-roofed building to a very large one incorporating several departments of school life. Students who graduated from the Gurukul were referred to as Snataks and had titles like Vedalankar and Vidyalankar conferred on them. The Gurukul, because of its location far from the city centre was a boarding school and no day scholars were allowed to attend it. They were expected

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to study Sanskrit and Hindu religious literature with all other subjects. The entire course proved very popular with students, and a high standard of all round achievement was maintained for many years. Apart from the regular schedule of activities that the boys observed each day it was expected that they would also perform the Sandhya and Agnihotra ceremonies. The success of this system of education was not as wide-spread as the D.A.V. College, because they were primarily established in non-urban areas to cater to the rural requirement of the country.

For Swami Dayananda the massive regeneration of the country by revolutionary educational systems and standards was very important. In his Satyarth Prakash he elaborates on the numerous ideas he believed were necessary to be introduced into his new school systems.²⁵

He regarded the following six principles as necessary for the implementation of a morally uplifting educational system:²⁶

1. An educational edifice could only be built on sound religious and moral training.
2. He insisted on chastity and celibacy for forming the basis of physical culture.
3. Personal hygiene.
4. Student-teacher relationship should be close and as far as possible verging close to a father-son relationship.
5. Hindi should always be the medium of instruction.
6. A total eradication of the caste system, communal differences, class distinction and every other form of social prejudice.

He was not opposed to the study of the English language and literature as such but opposed the English educational system that was introduced into India, as this diverted people's attention from a love of Hindu culture. The schools or patshalas he established had many strict rules more especially if these were boarding schools. Students had to observe rules of hygiene, diet, exercise, times of rising and sleeping and other forms of discipline. He took serious exception to any violation of rules by both teachers and students. It is now generally accepted that although Swami Dayananda himself was a man of great integrity and above all a man of great ideals, he could never expect the same level of co-operation and adherence to rules from others. Many of his assistants both teachers and others failed to follow the codes he laid down and the schools themselves closed during his lifetime for want of greater commitment to his ideals.²⁶ However when they were reopened by many of the stalwarts of the Arya Samaj movement they proved in many ways to be an outstanding success with many of India's foremost educationalists expressing pride in the achievement of the Gurukulas. Many outstanding contributions were made to formulating the highest objectives in educational aims and the method of achieving them. These were based on high principles of education from which emerged a new educational philosophy. For students there was a new spirit of commitment to high discipline and character building which was aimed at developing a new national consciousness which kept religious values, historical tradition, concepts of workings and ritual clearly in focus while yet not losing sight of developing trends in a modern, fast moving world of high technological advancement.

2.3.1 SATYARTHA PRAKASH AND OTHER WORKS

Swami Dayananda wrote a great many books in Sanskrit and Hindi. V. Shastri lists about nineteen books with

Satyartha Prakash - The Light of Truth as the greatest of these.²⁷ Satyartha Prakash is a comprehensive work covering a wide range of moral and religious beliefs. It is a work written in fourteen chapters and divided into two parts. The first part of the work consists of the first ten chapters and the second is composed of the remaining four. He summarises the entire work in what are referred to as the fifty-one articles of faith.

2.3.2 THE RIG VEDA BHASHYA BHUMIKA²⁸

The Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhumika as it is better known is a Sanskrit-Hindi work which forms an introduction to the Rig Veda Bhashya.

2.3.3 THE PANCHAMATA YAJNAVIDHI

This little work deals with the five great daily duties of every householder. He lists them:

Brahma Yajna: which deals with meditation on God twice a day.

Deva Yajna: a sacrifice called home or agnihotra for the purpose of creating a peaceful atmosphere of prayer and peace.

Pitri Yajna: which advocates worship for ministry to the wise and learned.

Balivaishva Yajna: for feeding the poor.

Atithi Yajna: for discharging hospitality to friends known and unknown.

2.3.4/.....

2.3.4 THE SANSKARVIDHI

This is a treatise on ritual ceremonies and deals with the performance of the principal ceremonies associated with the life of a person from birth until death.

2.4 THE FOUNDING OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

Swami Dayananda formed the Arya Samaj in Bombay on the 10 April 1875.²⁹ The formation of the Samaj had been one of the primary objectives of his life and preparation for it had been going on for many months, if not years, previously. His association with a group of close friends who felt deeply committed to the ideals he set forth had made it possible for the Samaj to be formed with the aim of raising people from the depths of degradation to which Hindu society had been reduced.³⁰

The words of Arya and Samaj may be translated as "Association of Noble or Righteous People". The word Arya makes no reference to any particular race, religion, sect or caste and aims only at character development. Thus the Arya Samaj is known as the "Society of Righteous Persons." That they are expected to live by high moral principles is a tenet of the faith.

To this movement fell the task of protecting and propagating the scientific, theological basis of Vedic religion as expounded by the teacher Dayananda. His contention was that "The Arya Samaj as a religious movement not merely in the sense that it is concerned with worship, prayer and philosophy, but its teachings embrace every aspect of life."

In all the teachings that Swami Dayananda gave out to people he met, he was given to declaring ad nauseam that the Vedas were the central authority for all religious Truth and mankind had to follow this truth alone and no other. Thus he said and repeated as often as he could, that his sole mission in life was to preach, not a new religion or a new creed, but the

ancient faith of Aryavarta, preached by all the great teachers of Hinduism since the first teachers taught their message. This truth he said was the message of the Vedas, the eternal truth revealed by God to man at the beginning of time and to last until the end of time when all mankind had come to know it in all its fullness and glory.

It thus stands to reason that the constitution of the Arya Samaj had to bear a clause which stated clearly that the Vedas and the Vedas alone, had to form the absolute, authoritative basis for all matters affecting the religious life of Hindus everywhere. This in effect meant that while the Arya Samaj preached no dogma as such, they had to concede that their declaration of the authority and infallibility of the Vedas was a dogma forming the basis of the Arya Samaj movement. Swami Dayananda then regarded several subsidiary scriptures as also important. These were the six Vedangas, the four Upavedas and the six Darshanas.

Some twenty-eight clauses formed the creed of the Samaj. These were read to the meeting on its opening day and accepted as its basic principles. The foundation of the Samaj had necessarily to be based on several guiding principles of religious conception in the light of so much corruption that the Swami encountered in all his travels around the country.

The creed of the Arya Samaj was however drawn up on the basis of Swami Dayananda's basic beliefs which were accepted as articles of faith by the Samaj. There were twenty-eight principles incorporated into the Samaj's original constitution when it was formed in Bombay on the 10 April 1875. However at a subsequent congress held in Lahore in 1877 the twenty-eight principles were reduced to ten and now form the ten important guiding principles of the Samaj, accepted by all Arya Samajists more as guiding commandments. Every

Samajist is expected to subscribe to these. They are more strictly in the nature of moral precepts which seek to guide the adherent to a high moral and ethical standard. Thus all who join the movement have no objections to accepting them. One principle makes reference to the monotheistic nature of the faith of the Samaj and the other that the Vedas are the repository of the true knowledge of God. It is therefore the paramount duty of every Arya Samajist to read them and teach them to others. The following are the ten principles of the Arya Samaj,³¹

1. God is the primary source of all true knowledge and all that is known by its means.
2. God is existent, intelligent and blissful. He is formless, omniscient, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchangeable, beginningless, the support of all, the master of all, omnipresent, immanent, unaging, immortal, fearless, eternal and holy and the maker of all. He alone is worthy of being worshipped.
3. The Vedas are the scriptures of true knowledge. It is the first duty of the Aryan to read them, teach them, recite them and hear them being read.
4. One should always be ready to accept truth and give up untruth.
5. One should do everything according to the dictates of Karma after consideration of right and wrong.
6. Doing good to the whole world is the primary object of this Society i.e. to ameliorate physical, spiritual and social conditions of all men.
7. All people should be treated with care, justice, righteousness and due regard to their merits.

8. Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge disseminated.
9. One should not be content with one's own welfare alone, but should look to the welfare of all.
10. In all matters affecting the well-being of society, one should subordinate personal interests; in matters that affect him alone, he is to enjoy freedom of action.

Swami Dayananda himself never became a member of the Arya Samaj. He had vowed never to introduce a 'guru cult' into it because he had been made aware of the evils of this form of religious exploitation. For this reason he became adamant in his teaching that all men were born equal and that the Samaj had to build its doctrinal edifice on the principles of equality, with no distinction being made regarding caste, position, learning, sex or economic standing.

The primary aim of the Arya Samaj was to do good to mankind, i.e. to ameliorate the physical, spiritual and social conditions of all men. The Swami was however primarily concerned about the Hindu community and the improving of conditions that would help to eliminate the degraded standards of behaviour to which society had been reduced. He made it obligatory for the members to embrace truth and reject falsehood. In becoming members of the Arya Samaj they were expected never to feel gratified in their own betterment, but always to work for the welfare of others. This welfare incorporated their physical, material and spiritual well-being. He prepared not to elaborate on theoretical doctrines. He therefore reduced the number of principles of the Samaj to ten and tried to present the code of ethical behaviour as moral obligations in as succinct a form as possible.³²

The/.....

The Arya Samaj thus basically and essentially represents a body of noble people believing in the divine authority of the Vedas as revealed by God to man for the purpose of declaring his love for mankind. Swami Dayananda thus asserted that the religion he preached was not new. It was the eternal truth taught in the Vedas and re-interpreted time and again by many of the great sages of India. Swami Dayananda was vehemently opposed to the corruption of the pure Aryan faith and the influence of Christianity and Islam upon his people. His call was for his people to go back to the Vedas and to assert themselves as true upholders of the truest and most ancient of faiths. Then while Swami Dayananda was wary of the attacks made against Hinduism by Christians and Muslims, he was more interested in purging Hinduism of its many superstitions, prejudices and idolatrous observances. His own spiritual ideas were born of the experiences he underwent throughout his life. It thus became a dedication to preaching the gospel from a radically different angle in the hope that a new and lasting code of religious commitment may be introduced into the ancient land of Arya Varta his native land and the home of the ancient faith he so deeply loved and cherished.

CHAPTER 3

MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES

Many historians confirm that since very ancient times India has been an integral part of Asia.¹ Various people have come to her territory, mostly in search of her legendary treasures. While many were passing adventurers, some made India their permanent home and remained to become a fateful part of her history and culture.² Unlike the far eastern influences of the Chinese and the Japanese that were rich and ancient, Roman and Greek influences were slight, while Persian and other Aryan influences of an earlier era were substantial. The first of the Muslims to go to India at about the eighth century were the Arabs who were temporary sojourners. They were followed by the Turks three centuries later who established themselves there permanently.³

Muhammed Baber, the Muslim Moghul ruler said it was always in his heart to possess Hindustan either peacefully or by force.⁴ Between 1000 A.D. and the years following, Mohamed of Gazni led no fewer than seventeen expeditions which led to the laying of the foundations of a powerful Muslim Indian empire. India was ruled for more than six centuries by Moghul Muslim rulers until the coming of the European traders and their free grab of power in a powerless, leaderless Hindu sub-continent.

The advent of European influences began with Vasco da Gama and the Portuguese in 1498.⁵ They were followed by the Dutch, the French and the British. The Company of merchants in London trading as the British East India Company, having received their charter from Queen Elizabeth, soon established trade links that filled the sea lanes to India with traffic heavily laden with spices and other riches of the East. The first Englishmen to set foot on Indian soil arrived to spread the message of the Christian gospel while nebulous and negligent

Hindu/.....

Hindu saints wandered from village to village oblivious of the wealth foreigners usurped with unbridled callousness.

In the centuries that followed, Muslim and Christian missionary and military efforts succeeded with aplomb.⁶ The chief reason for this lay without doubt with Indians themselves. Riddled as it was with caste and communal prejudices and above all with an incorrigible lack of religious cohesiveness, Indian society always found it difficult to formulate a singularly well-reasoned sense of socio-religious direction despite many centuries of deep rooted interest in religion. Thus her floating mass of beliefs, customs, social practices and sometimes even grotesque ritualistic ideas had always to form the backdrop against which Hindus themselves had to search out with extreme difficulty a binding doctrinal base for a coherent Hindu unity. The two foreign faiths spread throughout the land, more particularly in areas where poverty and caste prejudices ran deep and promises of freedom from their social and even economic shackles were heard with gullible impunity.

The growth and development of these two foreign faiths through force of numbers soon changed the face of Hindu India.⁷ For many centuries they spread their influences while powerless Hindus paid dearly the price of religious naiveté. Despite the grandeur of their faith and haughty claims of pride in it their pre-occupation with religious tolerance and respect for all religions exposed them to socio-cultural weaknesses that were the very bane of a society growing sterile with centuries of unchecked neglect and demeaning weaknesses of every king.⁸

Hindu, Muslim and Christian animosities have simmered in India for many centuries.⁹ Many people within the Arya Samaj movement have always felt deeply grieved that a Hindu nation could suffer such humiliation through millions of Indians being converted to foreign faiths, either forcibly or through

seduction/.....

seduction. It has always been obvious to all who are familiar with the situation that most converts are drawn from India's "lowest" castes. Hence converts are never won by theological coercion but always because of degraded social conditions in her poverty stricken environment.¹⁰ Thus Hindu-Muslim friction is always characterised by violence while Hindu-Christian relations are plagued by seething verbal animosities. For instance in 1897 Pandit Lekh Ram an indefatigable worker of the Arya Samaj cause and great stalwart and patriot in the movement,¹¹ was murdered by a Muslim. In 1903 Christian missionaries tried to use famine relief operations on occasions for making converts.¹² In 1922 and 1923 during the reconversion from Islam of more than two thousand families who had been forcibly converted to Islam by the Moplah rebels in Malabar and the reconversion of more than 30 000 Malkana Rajputs in the villages of Rajputana, Arya Samajists worked strenuously in the face of very great difficulties to avert massive apostasy.¹³ The beginning of the second world war in Europe coincided with growing hostilities between Hindus and Muslims in India which culminated in the partition of the country and the birth of a new one called Pakistan. This was seen by many as the ultimate irreparable humiliation Hindu India had to suffer in a situation engendered by British encouragement of religious intransigence.

India's political difficulties during the country's struggle for independence heightened religious friction, more especially between Hindus and Muslims. Muslim vociferousness has always been unmistakeable and despite their size as a minority group in India their force as a religious community has been extraordinarily powerful. However, both Christian and Muslim proselytizing for centuries in this economically backward country has always been very successful. Murray Titus observes that, "throughout the whole period of Muslim contact with India, the attitude of Muslim rulers to their Hindu subjects and their religion has been very largely one of intolerance or indifference."¹⁴ Very much the same can be said of Christian attitudes against indigenous Hinduism. The struggle therefore of Hindus and Hinduism against invading intolerance has been the backbond of her struggle for survival and despite the

plea for unity and mutual consideration, the struggle goes on even at the present time.

In his work "Satyarth Prakash" Swami Dayananda is unsparing in his criticism of Islam and Christianity. Apart from the intrusion made by these two foreign faiths into India, their criticism and total lack of appreciation of many of the finer points of Hinduism he felt were grossly unjust if not disrespectful.¹⁵ He chose therefore during the course of his teachings and ministry "to pay back to these two aggressors in their own coin."¹⁶ For this reason the Arya Samaj movement was sometimes described as a movement of self-defence. It is for this reason that the Arya Samaj has often carried on a vigorous campaign of propaganda against Islam and Christianity and thus to reconvert as many Hindus as possible who have been drawn into these faiths through ignorance and short-sightedness. The Samaj carried on a militant campaign to reintroduce a tone of manliness into its beliefs which it had lost due to centuries of Moghal and later British rule. Muslim agitation against Satyarth Prakash, more particularly its fourteenth chapter resulted in some Government rule being enforced to restrict its distribution.¹⁷ The Arya Samaj had its stronghold in Lahore, (now in Pakistan). The birth of this country caused the movement to lose millions of rands worth of property and untold millions of selfless workers were lost in the ensuing conflagration of partition.

Swami Dayananda's well-known method of dialogue through the holding of Shastrarths was continued by members of the Arya Samaj movement which proved popular in the second quarter of the present century. These Shastrarths were known to have been instrumental in helping Arya Samaj workers from convincing converts and would-be converts that Hinduism had much to offer and the Vedic faith was saved through thwarting possible conversion of hundreds of people.

Swami/.....

Swami Dayananda's argument against the presence in India of foreign faiths stems largely from the distrust he had for their preachers and more especially for the methods they used in proselytizing their message. Conversion through the use of force has been characteristic of Islam since the days of Jahangir and his ready willingness to express his belief in JIZYA.

"Fight those who believe not
In God nor the Last Day ...
... (even if they are)
Of the People of the Book
Until they pay the Jizya
With willing submission
And feel themselves subdued."¹⁷

And again: "Fight for the religion of God against those
who fight against you. And kill them
wherever you find them; for temptation to
idolatry is more grievous than slaughter."¹⁸

Using these quotations from the Koran, Muslim invaders sought to usurp through rape and pillage all that lay before them. And in the six centuries since the first Muslims set foot on Indian soil the carnage was continued until it abated with the split of the land and the birth of Pakistan.

Hindu-Christian animosities, quite unlike Hindu-Muslim antagonism, were largely verbal duels that engendered much hatred. For many centuries however these animosities have simmered and unlike the characteristic stand of peace and harmony that Hinduism has always preached, as epitomised in the work of Mahatma Gandhi, Christian missionaries have always fanned the flames of hatred by antagonising Hindus through coercive propaganda aimed at winning new converts.¹⁹

Among the many meetings that Swami Dayananda held to discuss matters of scriptural importance, the Shastrarth held at Chandapur in March 1877 was one of the most significant as it was held among representatives of the three faiths.²⁰

Swami Dayananda and Munshi Indramani represented Hinduism. The Christians were the Rev. T.G. Scott; Rev. Noble; Rev. Parker; and Rev. Thompson. Islam was represented by Moulvi Mohamed Quasim and Sayyed Abul Mansoor. In the two days in which discussions were held Muslim and Christian feelings ran high and discussions were replete with innuendos of every kind. Swami Dayananda's view reflected an age old Hindu stand in which he exhorted men to understand each other. He said, "To me it seems best that the Moulvis, the Missionaries and ourselves should meet in love and peace and investigate the Truth. No one should be hostile to others " ²¹ These opening remarks set the tone for the two-day meeting which culminated in the men believing that there was much to be gained through dialogue and that the age-old methods employed by Christian and Muslim missionaries could do with much reconsideration.

The singular, most outstanding contribution made by Swami Dayananda to religious understanding in India is his exhortation to all people, irrespective of caste or religious affiliation to strive to be Aryas, noble people whose characters rather than family background would reflect their religious standing in every walk of life.²² Thus he said the concept of Aryans as people transcends the communal barriers that have plagued Indian history for many centuries. ²³

The intrusion of two foreign faiths, in Dayananda's view was the addition of two new communal movements that further divided a nation heavily burdened by massive communal dissension and strife. He saw Islam and Christianity as two destroyers of her basic structure in ways he found difficult to comprehend as so many of the practices of engendering religious animosities they indulged in were totally contrary to everything he understood in terms of true religious practice.

Swami/.....

Swami Dayananda's incessant call was for Hindus to return to the teachings of the Vedas.²⁴ He saw his own message as irrevocably intertwined with the call for a return to the essentials of the faith that divorce from practice of extraneous beliefs such as idolatry which in turn introduced sterile and some unacceptable practices into the whole religious edifice he conceived. If the call then was for Hindus to "return to the Vedas" it became inevitable that antagonism towards foreign faiths and more particularly irreligious practices within Hinduism should grow. Swami Dayananda preached a movement of reform of nationalistic and indigenous lines. And many of the religious practices he advocated he hoped would flourish with the same fervour evinced by Muslim and Christian adherents to their respective faiths.

Swami Dayananda was deeply indebted to both Islam and Christianity in two respects, which he was ready to admit into the Arya Samaj movement after its formation.²⁵ He saw firstly that the Christian practice of congregational worship led by a preacher of good standing as of primary importance to systematic worship. He regarded this as one of the cornerstones of his rejuvenation policy which had virtually no parallel in the Hinduism of his time and practised by the masses of people in his country. His "back to the Vedas" call was however a reminder to many that congregations and systematic, organised, congregational worship was not unknown in Vedic times. The yajna was performed only if a small group of people were gathered together and Dayananda's call had to be so structured as to encourage congregations to gather for worship.

From the Muslim people in India Swami Dayananda learnt what it meant for masses of people to adhere to a faith with fanatical zeal.²⁶ He often repeated that if Hindus could awake to the same fighting spirit of the Muslims and not "sleep like Kumbhakarna", Hinduism would awake to a new dawning.²⁷ The basis of the call was his zealous condemnation

of/.....

of mythological, ritual-ridden Puranic Hinduism, and a return to the main tenets of Sanathana Dharma that imbibed purified conceptions of God, man and the divine relationship by which they were united.

The Arya Samaj has since its formation been epitomised by a great amount of virility and combativeness which have long been a trait absent in the religion practised by Hindus throughout the country in all ages of her history. Swami Dayananda was happy to see some of the enthusiasm within many Christian organisations fill the Arya Samaj movement which within a short period spread to many parts of the country. Its import to other countries in many parts of the world including South Africa was the direct result of the tone of virility he imparted into it on the model of the Christian and Muslim movements that spread their gospels with such ease in his God fearing country. Thus many of the practices that form an important part of the Arya Samaj services are now mirrored in the lessons learnt from traditional Christian services. He also extolled the spirit of enthusiasm in Islam which allows for a turning to prayer on no less than five times during the course of a single day. The Arya Samaj does however invite some anxiety among students of Hindu movements who see the movement developing into a sect, because Satyarth Prakash has virtually become its canonised holy scripture.

South African Arya Samaj now finds its roots being implanted in the same spirit which engenders beliefs among Muslims that Islam is the greatest religion in the world, while Christians exclaim exclusive salvation through one great Saviour. It is now clear that the strength and virility evinced by the movement in this country emanate from the strength, vigor and above all sincere convictions of the man Arya Samajists so greatly admire.

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SECTION THREE

ARYA SAMAJ IN SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

Chapter 1. Historical Perspective.

2. Eminent Arya Samajists.

3. Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

4. Aims and Objects.

5. Reception and Dialogue

SECTION THREE

INTRODUCTION

Before entering into a discussion on the Arya Samaj as a religious movement making a strong impact on the socio-cultural values held by some Hindus in South Africa we need to consider the frame of reference against which we plan to consider the structural-functional implications of its existence and impact.

The reformation that Swami Dayananda initiated in Hindu society was welcome to a large section of people who appreciated its reformatory motives. More than anything else his call was for people to reconsider the purpose and function of scripture as the repository of what he termed the message of eternal truth. Truth cut across all the other popular notions held by Hindus for centuries about the myths and rituals and above all supposedly religious practices that dominated Indian life for many centuries. Swami Dayananda held strong views on the caste system, child marriage, untouchability, widow remarriage, reconversion of Hindus to Hinduism and several other aspects of Indian life. His strong convictions on these and other matters led to a search for and discovery of a new religious system with totally new approaches to religious practice. The Arya Samaj intended to bring into existence a new order of soundness and vitality to an Indian society burdened with superstition and degenerative weaknesses of every kind.

Our task here is to consider the superordinate meaningfulness of the objectives of the Arya Samaj and to attempt an analysis of the reason why such a movement may lay claim to the role of a religious action system having a strong structural-functional base of operation.

The first is the structural category of the acceptance of the authority of the Vedas as revealed truth and the resulting theological overtones that exemplify religious conception among Arya Samajists in particular and Hindus in general.

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The second is a functional category of the reform in social practices such, inter alia, as the caste system and shuddi. And the third is in the area of religious understanding. Neo Hinduism now marks a considerable divergence from some age old practices that have come to be recognised as unacceptable malpractices having no religious meaning.

It is not the writer's intention in this study to apply any hierarchical distinction to the components of the social actions emanating from the prescribed religious behaviour of Arya Samajists. What the writer intends however is to consider the recommendations of Smelser¹ by analysing the components of religious action in the light of the superordinate meaning system emanating from the understanding of religious practice per se on the part of Arya Samajists themselves.

Swami Dayananda's pronouncements have now become the verbal symbols par excellence within the empirical purview of the movement. These symbols in a phenomenological sense reveal the deepest aspects of reality for a young, deeply religious community. The symbols are a means of knowledge. Brede Kristensen² suggests that symbols indicate the essence of reality and such symbols are represented by the new approaches arising from the reformatory principles advocated by Dayananda. The remarkable feat of the achievement lies in the maintainance of religious action while yet revolutionising the symbolic action and action in symbolism which advocated far reaching reforms, while yet maintaining the cultural enterprise that is distinctively Hindu. The human relationships that now mark out the Arya Samaj movement have come to epitomise new expressions of meanings and shared values in social life and also to initiate similar shared values in religious expression. Vernon³ writes that symbols identify things or practices and provide plans of action. Dayananda's plan of action, in the South African sense, was to introduce new social meaning to age old religious teachings.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The arrival of Indians in South Africa under agreements of indenture, was carried on amidst the search for economic prosperity in an environment that was always politically hostile.⁴ The socio-political difficulties the Indian people encountered on their arrival here were largely responsible for the growth of a state of religious limbo into which they found themselves being plunged. Some time was required for adjustment to their new situation that never accommodated their traditional modes in any way they had been used to in their native land. The kind of religious infrastructure necessary for assisting them to accommodate a strange new environment was sadly lacking, and this brought with it a host of problems in addition to the crucial socio-political ones they faced in a hostile western country.

The seeds of religious ferment in the Hindu community thus began to germinate almost from the very moment of their arrival in Natal, and this determination was marked by an escalation in religious misunderstanding to say nothing of theological ones. For more than forty years, many persons of concern believed that a need for religious reform, more particularly as Swami Dayananda had conceived it, needed to be introduced in South Africa. Contact with India heightened this feeling and soon a lead was taken to set in motion the machinery of innovation for drastic reform. The view that changes to modes of worship had to be made were supported by several leaders perceptive of the growing decay in religious standards. Modes of worship within the Hindu community varied from the most acutely ritualistic to the highly devotional with the emphasis being placed on familial themes that were seldom if ever, based on scriptural injunctions supported by any form of theological exegesis. Since these patterns of worship had had their origins in India, leading Arya Samajists

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concluded that the very seeds of destruction that Swami Dayananda had been familiar with there, had their corresponding similarities in South Africa.

From the year 1860 to the turn of the century, Hindus in South Africa were kept in a state of religious limbo. Although Hindu temples were constructed during this period⁵ their main purpose was the observance of rituals such as they had been familiar with all their lives. There were no religious institutions that disseminated any religious literature and none of the temples were known to have discoursed a specific doctrine except those preached through ritual and sacrificial worship. Hence no theological foundations were laid and all religious education was conducted through a kinship structure peculiar to the joint family system which obtained in the community at the time.

Apart from the fact that "kinsmen" are regarded by South African Hindus as of primary importance for the purpose of deriving social value and status in the community, religious perversions were allowed to dominate these values if "more knowledgeable" elders dictated these religious terms. It became a customary practice in most Hindu homes of any language group for one person to attain to a position of religious eminence or religious merit by deriving a special ability to perform rituals and ceremonies. In this way he or she was elevated to a position of authority and subsequently to practice and preserve religion, even if only in its most ritualistic form.

Priests in the Hindu community in South Africa, have never in their entire history in this country, been known to graduate from theological colleges. All priests in the community, from whatever language group they may come, inherit their profession by studying under the guidance of a Guru. His qualifications invariably rest with a sound knowledge of some religious literature either in Sanskrit or any other Indian language,

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an ability to perform numerous ceremonies, marriage and death ceremonies being the most common, and perhaps also being able to conduct a vernacular class wherever facilities for it become available. In many instances he was closely associated with a temple. By this was meant that he was a resident priest called on to perform the usual rituals that accompany every worship.

Pandit Nardev Vedalkar⁶ believes that when the first followers of the Arya Samaj movement of India arrived in South Africa at the turn of the century "they were alarmed at the spiritual and religious degeneration of their Hindu brethren in this country." Hilda Kuper⁷ similarly observes that apart from the average Hindu being relatively ignorant, Hindu masses "act their religion and don't think it." The emphasis in the criticism being placed on the acts being so grotesque as to be totally devoid of any real religious meaning. Ritual and dogma often form the focal point of religious behaviour in every religion, but within Hinduism they exacerbate a form of religious degeneration with sometimes quite alarming results. Swami Dayananda was only too well aware of this in his long, painful career as a religious reformer.

Enthusiastic sympathisers of the Arya Samaj cause saw numerous opportunities in South Africa for introducing reforms in religious concept and behaviour. An appeal was made to Pt. Hansraj⁸ and soon thereafter South Africa's Hindu community or one small segment of it at any rate, awaited with overawed enthusiasm the coming of one who was to set the scene for a new religious nativity in South Africa.

Visits to South Africa by prominent Indians were prompted largely by political considerations. Although Mahatma Gandhi's visit was initiated by a legal tangle involving a business firm⁹ he stayed to fashion an Indian political consciousness that could possibly have been foreseen before his arrival here. Among the prominent religious leaders to visit this country the very first was Professor Bhai Parmanand.¹⁰ His arrival here on the 5 August 1905 was well marked and publicised and his tour of South Africa at a very crucial period in the history

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of the Indian people is remembered as a milestone for religious reform and regeneration. Despite the enormous political turmoil and the hazards that surround the relationship between Indians and Whites in Natal during these early years, Prof. Bhai Parmanand's visit was a marked success. He was described as the first of the important Arya Samajists to visit this country so his talks, lectures and visits to selected areas had a marked effect on general religious interest. His tour of Natal and the Transvaal lasted four months.

At the time of Prof. Parmanand's visit the Hindu Indian community was experiencing its most crucial political difficulties. But Hindu religious immaturity appeared to have reached a new high in degeneration. Members of the Tamil community had no other recourse to religious affiliation apart from the ritual of Kavadi, while among Hindi speaking people the familiar Katha that few could understand was wholly popular.

The establishment of the Arya Samaj in India has strong implications for Arya Samaj activity in South Africa. The growth of interest in Swami Dayananda led to the establishment of small groups that ultimately grew to become formally constituted organisations although with purely local interest. One such group was the Ved Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg which preceded the formation of the national Arya Samaj movement in South Africa. Several other groups were similarly started by people whose influence in the community had not extended beyond their local geographical limits. It was however abundantly clear to many people that with the kind of religious activity that was now becoming a part of the Hindu scene in Natal between 1900 and 1925, the stage was being set for the formation of an Arya Samaj movement of national importance.

Swami Dayananda's preaching tours of many North Indian towns and villages meant that after his decision to revert to speaking Hindi his influence had to spread rapidly among all Hindi speaking people of North India. It was inevitable therefore that

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his message in South Africa had to be confined largely to the Hindi speaking community in this country. Because he was born a Gujarati, his influence among Gujarati speaking people was strong but nothing like the impact he had had on the Hindi community of Natal.

Hilda Kuper observes: "A house in an Indian area is never an isolated dwelling; it is integrated into the street, neighbourhood and community. Kinsmen often live near each other, affairs of neighbours arouse the gossip that controls the moral standards of the whole area; temples and schools are subscribed by local donations and become local and public meeting places; shops give credit to the families in the area; the local community develops an in-group awareness expressed in a number of local institutions."¹¹ It was in this way that even the most influential of messages could be spread. Also the more activist influence of political thinking that occupied the minds of so many of the Indian people because of the oppressive political climate in which they lived. And finally their responses to this invoked by their leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

"An Englishman's home is his castle," says Hilda Kuper, and "an Indian's home is his shrine." In Hindu homes, Hinduism is the dominant idiom of South African Indian life, the hearth is sacred, ritual plants are grown in the yard, a special room or part of a room is used for regular family prayers."¹² If this was the setting for a family gathering for the purpose of prayer, it was also the setting for the birth and germination of the seeds of religious awareness that culminated in the establishment of organisations like the Arya Samaj and others in South Africa.

Discussion on the sources of religious differentiation leads to an examination of the outcomes derived from such differentiation. Group structures are then seen to emanate within a formalised group pattern, and which follows in the development of different group structures. Group structures are largely based upon relationships between religion and society. An attempt in

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this section of this thesis is the analysis of the causes of religious differentiation, but also to relate the variations in religious structure to the question of the functions of religion..

Milton Yinger observes, "Most classifications of religious groups start from the basic distinction, first fully developed by Ernst Troeltsch, between the church and the sect."¹³ An interesting observation too concerns the methodological sophistication developing with reference primarily to the structure of a group affiliation, even if any form of guided leadership was absent. Our instrument of analysis assists in minimizing the similarities that mark out the religious organisations within the Hindu community which share a common socio-cultural system. The attempt to isolate the Arya Samaj is done to effect an analysis of a single religious innovation that is singularly divergent from all other institutions more particularly those serving the needs of a single minority and the typology constructs found within it.

The emphasis in the Arya Samaj is on sacrament and creeds and that of the Samajist himself on "right" or "noble" behaviour. The dual co-operation of action and ideal has resulted in an effort at social cohesion and order. The Samaj strives to be co-extensive with society to bring Hindus within its purview of nobility in religious action. Salvation for Samajists rests not only upon ethical achievement but also upon sacrament and acquiescence within its own creed to the norms it circumscribes. Thus religious discipline for Hindus as a whole as the Arya Samaj conceives it excludes those who question its premises, rather than those who fail to realise its growing noble standards.

This function of social reintegration and constructive religious engagement was conceived as ideal for Samajic work in South Africa. Its support for a new social order enabled it to create a growth of possibilities at the turn of the century which culminated in a historic achievement with the formation of an institution to express palpably its noble intention.

CHAPTER 2

EMINENT ARYA SAMAJISTS

Since the arrival of the first Indian people in this country in 1860 many eminent people arrived here on visits of various kinds. Most of them came with the intention of propagating religious ideals in several forms, while others arrived for purely political reasons as official delegates representing the Indian Government. Religious teachers came with the intention of propagating religious ideals in several forms. Although some of these teachers were people who were little known outside the community, others were people of international repute. One of them had been "moulded" in this country to be recognised internationally as one of the great men of the twentieth century.¹ The task in this section of this thesis will be primarily to assess the contribution made to the theological perspectives of the Arya Samaj movement in this country and to consider their contributions to the growth and development of Hindu thought nationally.

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar in his work lists the names of seven persons who visited this country in the years immediately following the formation of the Arya Samaj organisation upon which we focus our study in this thesis.² In addition to their visits as Arya Samajists Pandit Nardev also lists the names of seven other important visitors to South Africa as teachers and students of Hinduism. Although not strictly speaking Arya Samajists as such, their respect and admiration and acceptance of many Arya Samaj principles however qualified them for inclusion in the book.³ A third category of persons listed by Pandit Nardev is the group of South Africans who preached Arya Samaj ideals in this country at various times in its history.

It is necessary to note at this stage that South Africa's Hindu community comprises people of four language groups: viz. Hindi, Tamil, Telegu and Gujarati. Although people

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from each of these language communities have taken a deep interest in the Arya Samaj movement, its impact was always felt mainly among Gujarati and above all among the Hindi speaking community.

The birth of the Arya Samaj movement in India was felt with growing thunder in countries world wide. The spread of this movement among the people of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India meant that friends and relatives of people in these states who had emigrated to countries like Fiji;⁴ Mauritius, East Africa, Surinam, Trinidad, Guyana would necessarily express great sympathy and support for the Arya Samaj movement. It was inevitable that South African supporters would have extended invitations to prominent Arya Samajists to visit this country. That Professor Bhai Parmanand was the first Hindu teacher of merit ever to have visited this country is significant because of the invitation extended by supporters of the movement in this country.

Prof. Bhai Parmanand arrived on the 5 August, 1905.⁵ It is significant that no Arya Samaj movement was going to result from the professor's visit because, as Pandit Nardev Vedalankar observes: "On account of religious and linguistic differences, the formation of an Arya Samaj was not feasible."⁶ The professor's visit therefore had necessarily to confine itself to a form of religious awakening, coming as a result of the many talks, preaching visits to various towns and cities it engendered, and the interest in religion it aroused among all sections of the Hindu community. The Hindu Young Men's Association still flourishes to this day in Pietermaritzburg where the greatest interest among Hindus resulted in that city becoming perhaps the best known in South Africa for religious expression as the Arya Samaj movement would have it.

Prof. Bhai Parmananda's visit is not remembered by anyone today. But records indicate that this event had enormously far reaching consequences firstly for Hinduism generally and the Arya Samaj movement in particular.⁸ The professor, a faculty member

at Lahore College became familiar to his associates in this country as "Bhaiji" when he toured major centres in Natal and the Transvaal. He was an eloquent speaker who moved people with evangelical force and conviction to rethink their waning interest in Hindu teachings. Mahatma Gandhi who was in Johannesburg at the time was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee. The tour the professor undertook was significant because it had an electrifying effect on many people as it afforded many Hindus their first ever opportunity of listening to an evangelist preaching the word of God in a new strain. The professor spoke mainly in Hindi but was readily able to command himself in English as well. This was necessary as so many of his listeners were non-Hindi speaking people.

The professor stayed in South Africa for just over four months. The time was used for preaching a spiritual and cultural message but was totally inadequate for forming any institution of either provincial or national significance. However the Hindu Young Men's Association became known throughout Natal and its adherence to the study of Vedic literature had wide repercussions for the community as a whole.

Sri Swami Shankeranandaji Maharaj arrived in South Africa on the 4 October 1908.⁹ Described as "an ambassador for Hinduism", he proved to many here to be a worthy missionary who preached not only Arya Samaj principles but the message of Hinduism in its broadest form. The Swami's perceptiveness led to his gentle attack against much of the superstition, meaningless ritualism and other practices so common in Hindu modes of worship. He succeeded in initiating much enlightened thought on religious practices and his influence spread widely among many sections of the Hindu community. The Swami made a profound impact on the whole community. His stay in this country lasted nearly five years with a brief interruption of a few months to visit India.

Swami Shankerananda was the first Hindu monk ever to visit South Africa. His stay in this country occurred at a very

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significant period in South Africa's history. Less than two years after his arrival here the four provinces were united to form the Union of South Africa and exactly two years after this the South African Hindu Maha Sabha came into existence on the 31 May 1912.¹⁰ The Swami's knowledge of Hindu Philosophy enabled him to speak on the subject in many centres. In Johannesburg the Mayor of the city was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee, which accorded him a fitting welcome there. He delivered a series of lectures, probably about twenty in all in the Masonic Hall, which so impressed people as to draw large crowds of non-Hindu, particularly white, audiences. The Governor of Natal, Sir Mathew Nathan became a close friend of the Swami.¹¹

The Swami's talks were aimed at pinpointing which ritualistic practices he disagreed with. It is significant that ritualistic Hinduism had become the sole repository of religious practice for a large number of Hindus in India and elsewhere. And since people like Swami Shankarananda were committed to new systems of practice, his attacks were aimed mainly at removing what he and many Arya Samajists considered irrelevant, if not thoroughly useless religious practice. Pandit Nardev is of the view that the Swami's particular approach lay in making a sermonic appeal for the proper observation of festivals, daily prayers (Samskars) and the study of the vernacular.¹² Since Swami Shankarananda's original appeal, which he repeated many times, many people began to develop a new religious awareness in these terms. The average Hindu very often sees the study of religion as synonymous with the speaking of an Indian language. He formed many little organisations, of which the Veda Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg flourishes to this day.¹³

The Swami's greatest wish was to spread the gospel of the Arya Samaj. It was expected on his arrival here that his work would be directed at this and he is always remembered for that contribution in this country. Swami Shankarananda is however remembered for one single outstanding contribution to Hinduism in South Africa. This was the formation of the South African

Hindu Maha Sabha which represents Hindu religio-cultural interests nationally.¹⁴ In May 1982 the Maha Sabha celebrated its seventieth anniversary in the city of its birth.¹⁵

It is easily understood that the Swami's tour of South Africa, more particularly his visit to the Transvaal would be aimed at preaching the gospel of Hinduism as he understood it. However the Swami's preoccupation with preaching Hinduism pure and simple brought him into conflict with Mahatma Gandhi who was living in South Africa at the time and was deeply involved in the political struggles of the Indian people. His political struggle naturally involved uniting Hindu and Muslim people. For Swami Shankerananda the pain and agony of the desecration of India and Hinduism with the mass conversion of millions of Hindus to Islam lingered on. However his primary concern was with the regeneration of national, cultural and religious pride. The Swami saw his spiritual ministry in the context of the reawakening of pride in his people which he felt was sorely absent.

The results of Swami Shankerananda's ministry were actually felt in several directions. Firstly there was re-establishment of pride in religion, culture and language and secondly there was the attempt to enthuse people with high moral standards of behaviour in all walks of life. The impact that the Swami made on all people was naturally limited to his sphere of contact which varied in the cities and depended largely on the way people responded to invitations to attend his talks. The Swami proved himself to be a good friend and teacher of great merit among all with whom he came into contact.

Swami Bhawani Dayal was by all accounts the first and best known Arya Samajist born in South Africa. His birth took place in Johannesburg on the 10 September 1892.¹⁷ Although his contribution to Indian life and thought is remembered mainly in political circles it is as an Aryan missionary that he is mostly appreciated. Deeply committed to the Arya Samaj cause

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he worked as tirelessly for it when the opportunity came, as he did for the political emancipation of his people in India and South Africa. Swami Bhawani Dayal as a political activist courted arrest for several offences committed under the numerous Acts passed by the Government to deliberately frustrate the Indian community. It was during these political troubles that Mahatma Gandhi led his people from political subjugation. He was assisted by many Indian stalwarts as numerous books would describe. Swami Bhawani Dayal was one of his closest friends and associates.

Bhawani Dayal chose to become a monk during one of his early visits to India.¹⁸ After the death of his wife he joined a holy order and was given the name Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi. His work in this country was based on the Arya Samaj ideal with the spread of the Hindi language as a pivot of religious reform. He therefore chose to form several similar institutions in various parts of Durban and Natal. As a preacher of the Vedic message he toured many parts of Natal and the Transvaal with a deep desire to reform Hindu society and more particularly the Hindi speaking people. As a supporter of the Arya Samaj movement he joined the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in India. On his return to South Africa he performed many tasks, the most important of which was the enormous part he played in forming the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa. In addition he delivered many lectures and performed many ceremonies including the well-known Shuddhi Sanskar whereby converts from Hinduism were reconverted to their original faith.

The Swami was involved in a plethora of religious activities which took up all his time. His life thus became a constant stream of dedication to his religious cause and wherever he went it was either as a religious missionary or a political one. His singular ideal was however the emancipation of his people firstly from political oppression of every kind and secondly from immature thinking on religious matters which so plagued the Hindi community everywhere in Natal.

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Swami Bhawani Dayal's dedication to the Aryan cause was in a sense the foundation for the promotion of the Arya Samaj.¹⁸ The movement had received a great boost and the minds of many people were being tuned in to the idea of a movement built on more solid and more constructive ideals. Thus the Swami's interest in the life and work of Swami Dayananda Sarasvathi earned for him in 1925 the position of Chairman of the Centenary Celebration Committee, formed to mark the birth of the leader of the Arya Samaj in India. It naturally followed that this position was going to be followed by one, more lasting and honoured, when the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha came into existence in South Africa.

The teachers whose brief biographies we've traced thus far in this section were the men who laid the foundations of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in the years that led to its formation in 1925. It was however many years later that the movement's greatest servant came to this country and built it into the organisation that now merits the kind of attention being focussed on it in this thesis.

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar was originally invited to South Africa as a teacher of Gujarati. His arrival here in 1947 was awaited with much anxiety and it was known that his contribution to the study of Hindi, Arya Samaj ideals and modern Hinduism would receive unbridled attention. It was intended that he would stay for five years to perform his duties with great dedication. His services to the Arya Samaj cause now span thirty-seven years and he still maintains the position with untarnished esteem and appreciation.

Many members of the Hindu community are appreciative of the fact that Pandit Nardev, a graduate of the Gurukul at Kangri who is a Gujarati speaking person had dedicated himself to the teaching of Hindi. He was one of the people responsible for the coming into existence of the Hindi Shiksha Sangha which has been responsible for much Hindi education in Natal.¹⁹ The Hindi Shiksha Sangha is described by many of its members and supporters as a cultural organisation that has been responsible

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for "awakening cultural interest in young people in the Hindi community in this country." Since the formation of the Hindi Shiksha Sangha and its affiliates in many parts of Natal, interest in Hindi education and culture has grown very widely. Young people have taken to many of the performing arts and the annual eistedfod attracts very wide attention.

It is estimated that there are over fifty branches of the Sangh, which now is styled the Hindi Shiksha Sangh of South Africa. Many hundreds of young and old people participate in these annual eistedfods with its numerous sections of artistic talent in which people compete for honours. Pandit Nardev is one of the chief architects of this achievement. The organisation is however not confined to the Arya Samajists. Many non-Arya Samajists participate in its work and the organisation attracts a very wide following of people drawn from the Hindi community.

Pandit Nardev is at present a member of staff at the University of Durban-Westville, where he teaches Gujarati. The author of several works in Hinduism he is still the spiritual adviser to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa.

Panditji's contribution to the growth and development of Hinduism lies in two areas of learning: faith in the Department in which he works as adviser and Archarya to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He is also a member of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh and president of the Veda Niketan which is responsible for publishing several works in Hinduism. Hindi is the national language of India and Panditji's ideal like that of many Indians is that it be spoken by as many people of Indian origin as possible.

He is the Chairman of the Vedic Purohit Mandal which seeks to inculcate and develop the study and practice of Vedic Sanskars (ceremonies). Priests of both sexes are trained for this purpose and to date no less than thirty have been ordained to conduct services.

CHAPTER 3

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA OF SOUTH AFRICA

The year 1925 marked the centenary of the birth of Swami Dayanand Sarasvathi. Hindu communities in at least ten countries observed the occasion with various celebrations and festivities.¹ South Africa's Hindu community and more particularly its Hindi speaking people observed the occasion with equal enthusiasm. That the occasion should be observed in South Africa arose from suggestions made by several people to whom the life and work of Swami Dayananda was well-known. An organisation known as the Arya Yuvak Sabha which had been in existence for several years and was designed in a way to preach the Arya Samaj doctrine had made overtures for the celebration to be marked with due ceremony.² Preliminary discussions produced a wealth of enthusiasm and the growing interest in the Arya Samaj and its establishment in this country soon became a talking point of some magnitude. A meeting was held in Durban on the 22 November 1924, wherein it was decided that Sivaratri day in 1925 had to be observed in South Africa with the attention it deserved.³ A week long series of celebrations was held and on the 22 February 1925, Sivaratri day, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa came into existence.⁴ This was exactly one hundred years after the birth of the founder of the Indian movement and fifty years to the day on which the movement itself was formed.

The birth of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was not the beginning of the work of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa. It was one very significant milestone in its history. For many years previously the work of Prof. Bhai Parmanand, Swami Shankarananda, Swami Bhawani Dayal and many other very prominent Arya Samajists was being propagated.⁵ In addition to these organisations like the Arya Yuvak Sabha, Veda Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg had been in existence to propagate Arya Samaj principles and ideals. In fact the First Vedic Conference⁶ at which the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was formed, was attended by delegates from the following

organisations/.....

organisations who concurred that the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was necessary for co-ordinating and unifying the work of the various organisations already existing and which were represented at this conference.⁶ These organisations were:

- (i) Arya Yuvak Sabha - Durban
- (ii) Arya Hindi Ashram - Clare Estate
- (iii) Satya Vedic Dharma Jigyasi Sabha - Cato Manor
- (iv) Hindi Pracharni Sabhi - Sydenham
- (v) Arya Samaj - Ladysmith
- (vi) Hindu Young Men's Association - Newcastle
- (vii) Hindu Young Men's Association - Pietermaritzburg
- (viii) Vidya Pracharni Sabha - Pietermaritzburg
- (ix) Veda Sharma Sabha - Pietermaritzburg
- (x) Vidya Pracharni Sabha - Rooikopjes
- (xi) Young Men's Society - Point
- (xii) Nagari Pracharni Sabha - Springfield
- (xiii) Arya Yuvak Mandal - Sea Cow Lake
- (xiv) Vedic Sarmangi Sabhi - Umgeni
- (xv) Agri Pracharni Sabhi - Camp Drift

A week long series of celebrations was held to mark the occasion of the birth centenary of Swami Dayananda. It was at the last meeting in the series, at the end of the week, that the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was formed. This meeting was convened as the First Vedic Conference consisting of 136 delegates representing various religious institutes in the country. More than a thousand people were present at the meeting which included several Muslim, Christian and Parsi friends as well.⁷

Several significant features of the meeting still remain part of the historical development of the organisation. Firstly, the South African Hindu Maha Sabha which was formed in 1910 lay dormant and little could be done to resuscitate it.⁸ The South African Hindu Maha Sabha had actually been formed to

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represent the religious and cultural aspirations of the entire Hindu community in the country. Its dormancy caused people to rethink Hindu representation. The formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, although primarily intended to represent Arya Samaj interests nationwide had to fill the gap left by the Maha Sabha.

The 22 February 1925 was Shivaratri day. The resolution passed at the meeting to give birth to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha read: "For the purpose of preaching the tenets of the Vedic Religion a body named Central Aryan Vedic Society"⁹ be formed. An amendment to the resolution however read: "The delegates attending the Rishi Dayanand Centenary Celebration resolve to establish an Arya Pratinidhi Sabha through whose medium the cause of Vedic Religion be advanced." The formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha then became a reality.¹¹

The second feature of note in this history is that seven important resolutions were passed at this historic conference. These were:¹²

- (i) Abstinence from indulgence in alcoholic drinks.
- (ii) Performance of 16 Sanskars.
- (iii) Reciting Sandhya prayers and havan daily.
- (iv) Holding feelings of love and brotherhood for all people.
- (v) Removal of the caste system.
- (vi) The encouragement of Mother tongue education.
- (vii) Education for women and girls.

After the establishment of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha it was decided to affiliate the Sabha to the Savadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (International Aryan League) of India so as to bring the different units under the control of one large powerful centralised organisation. In keeping with this decision the Sabha was affiliated to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha on the 23 October 1927.¹³

Soon/.....

Soon after the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha the officials of the organisation set about trying to achieve the ideals they set themselves through a programme of work then prepared. Since the inception of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha it has held numerous Vedic Conferences to engender interest among the Hindu community.¹⁴ These Vedic conferences, each of national significance, were organised as part of the programme of reconstruction dealing with particular aspects of Hindu life and thought in South Africa.

The first Vedic Conference was held on the 16 February 1925 which brought into existence the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.¹⁵ The second Vedic conference was held in Ladysmith on the 3 October in the same year bringing together many Hindu organisations for discussing common problems.¹⁶ Over the weekend of the 31 July and 1 August of the following year the third conference was held over two days. The fourth in March 1939. The fifth over two days in February 1942 and the sixth on the 19 July 1947.¹⁷

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was responsible for convening the first ever Hindu youth conference in South Africa.¹⁸ The "First Aryan Youth Conference" was held on the 31 July 1948 in Durban at which various speakers delivered papers of cultural and religious significance.¹⁹

In July 1944 the Sabha was responsible for convening a conference of priests where discussions concerning the methods to be employed in the performance of ritual ceremonies was discussed and some important discussions concerning these taken.¹⁹

The Sabha was responsible for convening further meetings to discuss matters concerning children's education, the institution of Hindi as the common language among all Hindus, and others dealing with events in the life of Swami Dayananda Sarasvathi such as the birth anniversary, death anniversary, etc.²⁰

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Ever since the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, the desire was expressed among many of its members that the movement needed premises to house its headquarters. Ten years after its inception, the organisation was able through the generous efforts of some of its leading members to purchase property in the heart of the central business district of the city of Durban and plans were soon mooted for the building of a physical structure to house the organisation's headquarters.²¹ It came in the form of an old building situated at 21 Carlisle Street, Durban purchased on the 1 April 1936.²² Many well-meaning philanthropists have contributed substantially to the building of a Vedic Temple and a hall which were completed in 1975. The conception of this building meant that the Society, although not seriously handicapped by the use of the older buildings existing on the site, at the time of purchase, now found it comodious to conduct its affairs with far greater facility than before.²³

The opening of the Temple in October 1975 meant that the society was in fact marking its fiftieth year of existence.²⁴ The occasion was celebrated with due pomp and ceremony. A brochure¹ marking this Golden Jubilee gives ample evidence of the joy of the occasion with many notable personalities joining in the celebrations.²⁵ Two Acharyas from India, specially invited to these celebrations, played a very prominent part in the success of the proceedings which culminated in many people in Durban and other parts of Natal and perhaps even in the rest of South Africa coming to recognise the existence of the institution started in the name of reformed Hinduism. The physical structure is a good example of an Indian building with the facade bearing a Hindu motif. The difficulties that the organisation experienced in raising the necessary funds were quite extraordinary but when these were overcome, members were able to settle down to putting to use the Vedic Temple and hall built at a cost of over R159 000. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was therefore able to commemorate

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the centenary of the founding of the Indian movement, and the fiftieth anniversary of its own formation in a building entirely its own, free of debt and wholly comodious to the programme of work decided by its founding fathers.²⁶

My attendance at meetings, firstly a meeting of the Executive Council of the Sabha at its headquarters and secondly the 58th Annual General Meeting held on the 24 April 1983 was well received. At each of these meetings business matters were discussed at great length. There was much discussion about the Centenary of the death of Swami Dayananda Sarasvathi. In this regard the programme of service and commemorative meetings envisaged were very numerous indicating the serious nature of the efforts to publicise the life and work of the founder of the movement.²⁷

The fifty-seventh annual report of the Sabha²⁸ contains information on its present activities. Its fifty-seven years of existence reflects steady, progressive involvement in specific areas of service which may be measured and assessed only over a long period of time. The report however demarcated special services rendered in ritual ceremonies: weddings, funerals, and "other sanskars".²⁹ It also lists the names and number of festivals like Shivaratri, which within the Arya Samaj movement is referred to as "Dayananda Enlightenment Day", Ram Naumi, Krishna Ashtmee, Deepavali and a few minor observances.

The services at the Vedic Temple are held regularly every week. The Sabha is very anxious that such services which are conducted at local prisons and elsewhere be encouraged in every way. The annual meeting took note of the enormous service being rendered by the Arya Samaj movement to religious awakening in South Africa among the Hindu community. The issuing of a newsletter is a recent phenomenon giving a strong indication of the effort to publicise the work of the Samaj so far as Swami Dayananda's life and work is concerned.

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The work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is no longer centred at its headquarters. Much attention is given to its multi-faceted activities in its subsidiary organisations which are engaged in numerous activities closely connected with the social, cultural and above all religious upliftment of the Hindu community in many parts of Natal and South Africa.

CHAPTER 4

AIMS AND OBJECTS

Most Arya Samajists believe that Swami Dayananda founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 with the aim of promoting the spiritual, social and physical well being of all mankind.¹ That the Arya Samaj chose, at least as a stated principle, to work for "all mankind" is significant and theoretically typifies its universal outlook. This fact however has always been thwarted by the fact that Arya Samaj work has always had necessarily to be confined to working within Hindu society for its moral, social, political and primarily religious benefit. "Mankind", the Arya Samaj has therefore chosen to divide into two groups. People it regards as noble at least in outlook and behaviour and those less inclined to living by noble principles. It is significant therefore that the Arya Samaj message is aimed at upholding principles that span a variety of ideals for human welfare. Pandit Nardev² has discussed these under the following headings:

- (i) Philosophical and spiritual ideals.
- (ii) Outlook towards the world.
- (iii) Ethically disciplined life.
- (iv) Development of individuality.
- (v) Development of social consciousness.
- (vi) World unity and universal brotherhood.²

The Rig Vedic assertion that all should aim to be noble is used as Vedic authority for such a principle. Thus the word Arya itself is always translated and interpreted to people as such never accounting for sect, race, colour or creed that people may belong to. The Arya Samaj obviates an important difficulty that could arise by claiming that all people irrespective of race or nationality could be Arya Samajists. The Society seeks only to bring together "pure, noble and righteous persons".³ It therefore concludes that people of all nations could be Arya Samajists provided they respect the

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culture and religious sovereignty of other nations. It is perhaps for this reason that many non-Hindus respected Swami Dayananda. Nobility of outlook had thus become a fundamental article of faith because that had been lacking among Christians and Muslims in particular, evidenced by missionary achievements in India before the coming of Swami Dayananda which had been based on narrow principles which enforced conversion, lack of religious tolerance and above all religious bigotry of the very worst kind.⁴

The universality of outlook to which the Arya Samaj subscribes has of necessity to be upheld largely as a theoretical principle. These very principles have necessarily to be submerged until Hindu ideals as conceived by the Arya Samaj could be achieved to a more lasting and recognisable level in the light of its history of failure in India. The spiritual principles to which the Arya Samaj subscribes therefore speaks of the broadest of Hindu teachings to accommodate its subscription to univarsity. These are:⁵

- (a) Its belief in one God as the father of all mankind.
- (b) God-realisation as the aim of life.
- (c) And having the belief that it is possible to know God through the knowledge of the Vedas revealed by God "at the beginning of the universe of all mankind".

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is fully aware of the need for a wide catholicity of views but the aims and objects of the Sabha are more strictly defined for the sake of Hindu unity. Before 1925 several Hindu organisations had been in existence, some of them preaching Arya Samaj principles.⁶ The tours of this country by people like Swami Shakeranand, Prof. Bhai Parmanand and Swami Bhawani Dayal served to inspire people to think in terms of Hindu unity and service to the community in respect of Hindu cultural and religious ideals.⁷

The seven main aims of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha as listed in

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its constitution are:⁸

- (i) To establish, organise and consolidate Arya Samaj institutions and Vedic societies in South Africa.
- (ii) To the Arya Samaj and its Ten Principles in this country.
- (iii) To disseminate the Vedic Religion and philosophy.
- (iv) To promote the art, culture and civilization of India.
- (v) To encourage and advocate the study and use of Hindu and other Indian languages.
- (vi) To protect and defend the rights of Hindus and to concern itself with their spiritual, moral and social upliftment.
- (vii) To co-operate with other Hindu organisations on matters affecting the Hindu community.

The constitution goes on to stipulate that the headquarters of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha shall be situated at 21 Carlisle Street, at the large building complex which houses the Vedic Temple, the Aryan Hall and the Bhawani Dayal Council Chamber. In 1973 an historical account of the Sabha was published,⁹ in which it stated that twenty-six institutions "working on the basis of Arya Samaj principles and Vedic ideals" were affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. The annual report for 1981¹⁰ lists the names and addresses of forty-three institutes now affiliated to it.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has now been in existence for very nearly sixty years. In the present year (1983) Arya Samajists all over the world have marked the centenary of the death of Swami Dayananda the founder of the Arya Samaj movement. In South Africa several of the more erstwhile members of the Organisation look back on fifty-eight years of service to the community however much it may be regarded, as it sometimes is, as small and insignificant and sometimes also being criticized for not strictly conforming to all the Arya Samaj rules laid down by its founder.¹¹

Almost all the members and supporters of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha are Hindi speaking people and all religious and cultural ties are irrevocably measured against the use of love for Hindi. So, "one of the main activities of the affiliated units has been the establishment of classes and the building of schools for the imparting of Hindi education".¹² The educational needs of the Hindi community gave rise to concerted efforts being made to imparting Hindi education to Hindi children. The arrival in South Africa of its priest and spiritual adviser has helped to facilitate the work of the Sabha. This was also considerably enhanced with the establishment of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh. This organisation is not an Arya Samaj organisation as it falls outside the fold of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and works for Hindi cultural and educational interests totally independent of it.¹³ The achievements in introducing Hindi education through the local technical college, introducing eistedfods and encouraging children from all parts of Natal to participate in these through songs, dancing, story telling, poetry recitals, debates were and still are some of its outstanding achievements. Although not connected to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha because the work of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh had to transcend the limits of Arya Samaj parochialism the Hindi Shiksha Sangh in a sense owes its existence to members of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha because of their interest and magnanimity in working for the Hindi cause. The Hindi Shiksha Sangh thus earns the support of all Hindi speaking people including many who are not Arya Samajists.

The Arya pratinidhi Sabha has been responsible in the fifty-eight year history of its existence in South Africa for organising the various Vedic Conferences. It also keeps a close watch on the work of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, the parent organisation of all Hindu organisations in South Africa. Since its inception in 1925 the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has been affiliated to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in India, the world or international Arya Samaj movement with its

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headquarters in New Delhi, India. The parent body in India sets the tone and gives the lead in matters of principle and doctrine while leaving local organisations to fashion their own programmes to suit local conditions.

CHAPTER 5

RECEPTION AND DIALOGUE

The reception accorded the Arya Samaj although by and large enthusiastic and supportive, was also hostile in the extreme.¹ The Hindi community, and to a lesser extent the Gujarati community, was split into two camps dividing opinions into supportive and antagonistic roles. An interview with Mr N.M. revealed one of the most important reasons for the attitudes of intransigence which characterised dialogue between the two groups. It was during this time that the two terms "Samajists" and "Sanathanis" came into vogue to distinguish representatives of the two factions. Most people found themselves very unwilling to place their age old religious beliefs and traditions on the sacrificial altar of reform.

It is for this reason that the establishment of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was accepted with some trepidation. Although Samajists themselves were very enthusiastic about it, Sanathanis displayed some reserve, and in some instances opposition. The work of the Arya Yuvak Sabha and the Ved Dharma Sabha for more than a decade prior to the establishment of the parent organisation had already spread some suspicion if not animosity among the community generally.² Sanathanis however felt a certain uncertainty about the work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha because of the enthusiasm among Samajists to spread their gospel.

The formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha thus served as a catalyst for thinking among Sanathanis about their own religious affiliation. It was however only in April 1941 that they were able to give expression to their aspirations through the formation of a national organisation called the Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha of South Africa.³ Although the Sanathan Dharma Sabha was supposed to represent a larger number of people in the Hindi community and represent also the more conservative and orthodox viewpoint, it was never established that this Sabha actually had as strong an influence over the Hindi people as the Arya Samaj had over Arya Samajists.

The establishment of the Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha had one serious effect on the Hindi community in its concern for religious practice. The open discussions which betrayed much animosity between the two groups often escalated into serious situations of verbal and also at times theological battles on the essential basis of religious affiliation for the Hindi people. Articles published in the readers columns of newspapers like "The Leader" and "The Rising Sun" bore testimony to this conflict of ideas which was so strongly felt in the Hindi community.⁴ The feelings have always engendered and maintained the division with men still publicising in local newspapers their respective stands. Consider the spate of letters published in "The Leader". In an article published in this newspaper some forty years later reference was made to the controversy that raged through its columns on the merits of the caste system and other matters that affected this community at the time of the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, and their persistence in South Africa even at the present time.⁵ This is however not to suggest that the two organisations have remained opposed to each other on theological and other grounds and no meeting for consensus could ever be arranged. Not so. Another correspondent's letter to the Leader published elsewhere in the Reader's Column of the same edition draws attention to the effort made by some members of both organisations, deeply affected by the rift the controversy causes within the community who have indulged in much behind the scenes work to heal the rift in every way possible.⁶ One example of this is that the "anniversary celebrations of the Shri Vishnu Temple were characterised by close participation between Arya Samaj and the Sanathan persons"⁷

Despite these efforts on the part of members of both groups the rift remains. This rift is however never allowed to interfere with the work of the Arya Samaj, being committed as it is to its own programme of action.⁸

An interview with two senior officials of the Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha elicited the long standing views held by Sanathanis

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generally. The first interviewer was of the view that a murthi symbolised a living God in concrete form. The Arya Samajists, he said did not believe in Murthis. They however had no right to show disrespect to the Murthi Sanathanis have in their temples. Sanathanis believe in starting with the concrete by giving concrete shape and form to God. Thus worship for them is worship through symbols because symbols have an important part to play in all worship. The very language Sanathanis use in worship, the symbol Om, the songs and all rituals symbolises worship and add concrete form to it. Thus devotion to God is never complete until it becomes devotion to a living symbol, or a living form. Although images may be in the form of pictures or stones or wooden images sculptured by an artist, to Sanathanis they represent God with form. Without the central deity a temple is empty and ordinary people who have no profound understanding of God or the Hindu religion are never inspired by an empty Temple. But a Temple filled with artefacts and images represents a cultural and religious tradition that is richly blessed with the symbol of love and cultural splendour. An Arya Samaj Temple is known for its emptiness and even coldness, and many worshippers have difficulty in placing it into a specific cultural milieu.

A strong controversy that exists even now is the problem surrounding the Vedas. Sanathanis are generally reluctant to accept Swami Dayananda's view or interpretation of the Vedas. At least they are reluctant to accept his interpretation in toto. There may be some validity to his arguments but Sanathanis are reluctant to grant him total authority.

Dayananda's views concerning the Puranas they believe are his personal views. Sanathanis are not obliged to accept or follow them. Sanathanis are of the view that the Puranas don't contradict the Vedas, they uphold them. They support them and even interpret them for the devotee's benefit. While Sanathanis are aware of Swami Dayananda's condemnation of the Puranas with some justification, Sanathanis are not insensitive to the part played by the Puranas in preserving Hinduism, even in an adulterated form. For this Sanathanis are grateful. They

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therefore do not deny the authority of the Vedas, but are also grateful to the Puranas for some of the good they have done while not unmindful of the difficulties that arise with their study.

The second interviewer believed that Arya Samajists generally displayed strong attitudes of dogmatism and such attitudes did very little to engender religious tolerance and harmony for which Hinduism is well known. Hindu missionaries have always seen much good in the religion of the Sanathanis, as many Hindus are convinced that there is no dire need for such a radical transformation of modes of worship and religious practice as advocated by the Arya Samaj. The Sanathanis' contention therefore is that Arya Samajists should broaden their outlook on religious practice. While many people are appreciative of their viewpoint and are impressed with the good that results from it, one has to be aware of their dogmatism and narrowness of outlook. For this reason Sanathanis believe in the caste system. The Bhagavad Gita speaks of it. But Sanathanis are particularly proud of the contributions made by the Brahmin community in upholding culture and religion and preserving it for the benefit of Hindus of later generations.

It would appear from the interview that some attempt at dialogue was made and while both groups of people were aware of either viewpoint, disagreement between them escalated into attitudes of intransigence.

Sanathanis in South Africa are aware of the Swami Dayananda's style of discussion. There was for example the discussion between him and Sanathanis at Meerut.⁹ It appears that his unwillingness to refrain from denouncing idolatry was one of the most important reasons for Sanathanis rejecting him and his movement. It was however also clear that despite Swami Dayananda's open rejection of the contention that his preaching was a form of Dayanandism, many Sanathanis remain unconvinced of this. Dayananda's statement: "It is wrong for anyone of you to say that you believe in the religion of Dayananda. What you should say is that your religion is Vedic."¹⁰

Sanathanis however are reluctant to believe that Dayananda had an absolutely clear grasp of the Vedas in the first place.

A further problem with Sanathanis is their failure to understand his respect for all religions of the world while failing so hopelessly in seeing any good in the doctrines of the Sanathanis. The Sanathani standpoint is that if any man claims to respect all religions in the world it is difficult to understand why he never began with respecting all traditions and sects within Hinduism itself. A small number of Sanathanis was also not unmindful of the fact that Satyarth Prakash was highly critical of Christianity and Islam. Although Sanathanis feel that this criticism is not unjustified his criticism of Jainism and Sikhism they felt was extending beyond the limits of scholarly investigation with Dayananda displaying some malice towards them.

In this respect J.N. Farquhar¹¹ observes that this section of the work has encouraged Aryas in their controversial attack against Sanathanis and others thus winning vehement hatred of the Samaj rather than friends as ought to be expected. Dayananda's own methods have succeeded well in arousing a number of sects to retaliation. This feature was not absent from the reception Arya Samaj received in South Africa because of the stinging taunts of Arya Samajis. Sanathanis however appreciate the stand taken by the Arya Samaj on matters that have for centuries plagued Hinduism and therefore welcome Dayananda's role as a reformer. For example, orthodox Hinduism allows only men of the three higher castes to study the Vedas. The Arya Samaj innovation in inviting both men and women of all castes to study them is accepted with the one single proviso that it has always been a Hindu tradition to allow only, in Arya Samaj terms, Aryas to study them. Sanathanis now concede, that Hinduism's greatest mistake was to have made Brahminism a caste. The new religion of the Arya Samaj says that only Aryas should study the Vedas, even Harijans if they display sufficient interest and spiritual inclination for it.

Among the leading exponents of Arya Samaj and Sanathani viewpoints were people like Pandit S. Dube of Pietermaritzburg

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and Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi. As mentioned earlier newspapers like "The Leader" and a minor publication called "The Rising Sun" carried the controversies between the opposing groups. In an attempt to maintain support for the caste structures of orthodox Hinduism Pandit S. Dube contended that the Vedas in several mantras lent support to caste as a religious and social phenomenon of Hindu society.

Swami Bhawani Dayal's retort was that the Pandit's quotation could never be located in the Vedas.¹²

The quality of arguments proffered both for and against prevailing viewpoints reflect thinking on the part of some members of the Hindi and to a lesser extent Gujarati communities in South Africa. In a wider perspective investigations have revealed many of the stresses and strains that have encumbered religious commitment among Hindus as a whole because the controversy on such matters rages to this day among members of all the four language groups that make up the community in South Africa.

The formation of the two organisations within the Hindi community in particular has been responsible for driving the community into two camps of religious commitment. This dichotomy of thinking has engendered a crisis of conscience which has persisted to the present day and no clear statement was ever made to allay fears and satisfy desires for theological reconciliation that many have sought. Two works that have tried to bring forth in clearer terms the viewpoints of both sects have done little to reconcile their respective stands.^{13,14}

Perhaps the most important feature of this arises, as unfortunate as it may appear for many who wish to encourage strong links of a cohesive and united community, from the fact that while both organisations may do everything to encourage their own respective theological perspectives and so split the community into diverse camps, they also manage to encourage deeper religious commitment. In so doing the Arya Samaj has been able to make the performance of havan fundamental to all worship within its own system.

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Every sacrament and every ritual has the havan as its most important sacrifice and Samajists thus reaffirm at every service their total commitment to a system of worship that has its origins in Vedic times. In so doing they believe themselves to be followers of the religion of the Vedas and preserve its most sacred ideals in every way possible.

Sanathanis on the other hand sing songs dedicated to the many personages of the Hindu traditions. They encourage the chanting of Hanuman Chalisa which has grown in popularity over the years. With the formation of the two large Vedantic institutions in South Africa¹⁵ the chanting of Hanuman Chalisa has become even more popular. Readings from Ramayana and Mahābhārata grow in popularity and study of all sacred literature grows with corresponding enthusiasm. While this is not done with any conscious effort at thwarting Arya Samaj interests it certainly helps to remind the Samaj that Hindu thinking is still firmly structured in a way that has been in vogue since Vedic times. Sanathanis therefore while praying to God through their favourite images believe themselves to be followers of the religion of the Vedas and preserve its most sacred ideals in every way possible.

We began this chapter by stating the intention to discuss the Samaj as a structural functional system of religious endeavour. We have so far come to recognise how the life and message of Swami Dayananda has not only been the inspiration behind the Arya Samaj movement but also the guiding strength of the renaissance in Hinduism in South Africa. This must be seen against the important fact of the birth of this movement in a new setting where modern times were being experienced more clearly than they could have been in India. South Africa, a modern western industrialised country, lent itself very favourably to providing a new environment in a new historical period for a growing neo-Hinduism that found support among many South African Hindus. A fundamental condition for a dynamic society, which probably was Dayananda's intention, was the freedom to be religiously expressive and which gave room for the growth and expression of religious endeavour in a new direction. Above all it gave scope for criticism of

old values, determination of new ones within a changing social structure and finally effected a modernised constitutional framework for the growth and development of theological ideals in a reformed, modern context free of old superstitions and non-religious inanities.

Arya Samaj leaders in enforcing these changes indicated this passion for change. A passion accompanied by a willingness to suffer some ordeal through initiating the moves that effected the ultimate changes sought. The result has been a revival of Hinduism, but in a new form, with a religious movement advocating strong socio-ethical values and a reorientation of an ancient faith to meet new challenges in a modern age.¹⁶

The single most outstanding feature of this new movement, which is the pivot around which all other facets of its ideal revolve, is the belief that the Vedas, the treasure of science and morals, were revealed by God for man's illumination.¹⁷ Dayananda regarded their textual portion as self-evident truth, admitting of no doubt and depending on the authority of no other book. Commentaries on the Vedas, such as the Brahmanas, were considered authentic because they adhered to conceptual models in the Vedas. If they departed even ever so slightly from Vedic Truth their authority on scripture would be annihilated.

The Vedas we have to view as scriptural ideals which teach a religion which advocates the speaking of truth and following all virtues such as impartiality and justice. These are to be regarded as the commandments of God and therefore consistent with the final import of Vedic teachings which culminate in religious endeavour leading to final Illumination.

The soul, immortal and invisible, is endowed with the ability to think and judge. It is also affected by desire and passion, pleasure and pain. God and soul are incorporeal and unchangeable and are related to each other as the pervader is to the pervaded. The distinction of their respective individualisation is constant, which means that their physical natures are not identical. Divine power is the cause of creation and the equitable bestower

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of rewards and punishments on the actions of souls. Creation points to a Creator, while birth and death are to be seen as springing from ignorance which perpetrates irreligious acts, which in turn promote the worship of objects in place of God.

Salvation is the state of emancipation from the endurance of pain and subjection to birth and death and equal to a life of liberty and happiness in the immensity of God. The means of salvation are contemplation of God, abstraction of mind, practice of virtue, purity of thought, firmness of courage and love of knowledge.¹⁸

A superordinate meaning system envelopes the whole movement to give meaning and coherence to the hierarchical relationship at all levels of action and religio-social interchange. The existential referents of theoretical symbolism may be classified in terms of the empirical expressions within the movement. Following on Mukherjee's¹⁹ contention we are able to grasp how the religious symbolism, in a phenomenological sense, reveals to the Arya Samajist his approach to the deepest aspects of reality.

Milton Yinger²⁰ quoting Charles Clack and Rodney Stark, refers to the religious beliefs, practices, knowledge and consequences within religious dimensions in experiential terms. Religious values he defines as attributes with possible variations permitting an adequate measurement of religion and religious behaviour. A difficulty arising from the effort to measure religious behaviour is the inter-connection between religious tradition and experiential verbalisation. Thus Dayananda's contention that Truth represents the highest value may represent for Arya Samajists an ideal by which the symbol is identified and formulates for them a plan of action.

The plan of action for Arya Samaj within its own definitional purview is bound to the domain of finite understanding. Unlike the ideal circumscribed by other systems within Hinduism, such for example as may be described by Sri Ramakrishna, Dayananda's definitions are limited to religious endeavour in moral and ethical bounds. Sri Ramakrishna's, "A man's duty is to be

united with God", does not find a clear equivalent in Dayananda's expressions. "It is to know that God is the only Reality and that all else is unreal."²¹ Sri Ramakrishna's illustrations of the means for unity between man and God have set the model for the ideal within the movement established by Swami Vivekananda.²² Arya Samajic ideals are not described in clear expletives in experiential terms, but rather in ethical ideals. We thus find ourselves bound to the finite, the domain of the finite in which symbols help to demarcate the highest truth through inductive expressions.

Arya Samajists nevertheless love Dayananda's expression concerning the Tirtha, the religious ferry, the spiritual ark by which the sea of sorrow in the abyss of pain is crossed.²³ The Tirthas are the speaking of truth, the attainment of knowledge, the friendship of savants, the practice of morality, dominion over the self, the discipline of mind, the magnanimity of heart, the instruction of science and the habit of beneficence. B.C. Singh lists the eight gups and eight true things that Arya Samajists are expected to avoid or follow.²⁴ The attainment of the ideal is the attainment of Reality in Arya Samaj terms. The aim lies in recognizing the all pervading Spirit which transcends all limitations of human inadequacy and to realise the goals rooted in Vedic Truth.

Smelser refers to this structural category of religious systematisation as situational facilities,²⁵ providing the means for facilitating religious attainments within specific contents. A specific facility provided by the Arya Samaj is the Havan ceremony, the principles of Truth and other struggles as outlined in ten principles. The Arya Samajist is expected to identify these facilities and to incorporate them into the general frame of religious struggle which culminate in worship of the One true God in the Vedas. For Dayananda this indicated a more practical expression of religious struggle, which culminated in a more lasting religious experience, totally different from any that characterized traditional worship. The single most outstanding feature of this expression is marked by total expression and total response involving total

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being. The intensity of such involvement meant for Dayananda what Scheler described as religious cognition existing somewhat inadequately in theoretical definition, and only manifesting when such involvement ends in full expression of religious meaning.²⁶

Religious liturgy within the Arya Samaj has necessarily to differ radically from Sanathani forms of worship. A specific pattern has therefore to be followed emphasizing the religious constructs expressive of religion in action. Such action had necessarily to influence cultural behaviour whose effect is seen in the totality of expression within Hinduism. Religion is therefore a part of cultural fact. A design for living relative to sacred and ultimate things. As cultural fact it becomes part of social organisation. In the Durkheimian sense such social organisation unites those who share a body of beliefs while the individual is subject to beliefs and motives that incline him to total action. For the Arya Samajist action, while appearing as religion, finds its most meaningful expression in both religious and secular actions.

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SECTION FOUR

THE ARYA SAMAJ CONCEPT OF RELIGION

Introduction

Chapter 1. The Vedas as Authority for Arya Samaj Theology.

2. Theory of Divine Revelation.

3. Concept of God.

4. Concept of Man, Caste and Social Values.

5. Concept of Purpose and Goal of Life.

INTRODUCTION

The foundations which Dayananda laid for the movement indicate firstly the depth of his spiritual convictions and secondly his depth of concern for Hindu society. The phenomenon of basic structures helps to distinguish within religion the complexities of religious types. Investigations into these circumstances of historical religions reveal the phenomenon that exposes the features of world religion or utilitarian modes and their appeal as God-centred folk lore.¹ Gustav Mensching distinguishes between folk religion and world religion and suggests that territorial diffusion is not the only distinguishing feature of such a distinction but rather also the deeper structural differentiation of religion per se.

For this reason it must be noted that the community becomes the vital carrier of a religion and its own responses to religious vitality help to restructure religious consciousness and religious purpose. In the analysis of world or as is sometimes described universal religion, external phenomena are inextricably associated with inner structures. Rudolf Otto's² "the law of parallels", is suggestive of the transition that occurs in certain situations and quite clearly the phenomenon is identified as he says in the transition from myth to logos, mythology to theology.

Dayananda's problem was precisely this. For him the transition from myth to logos was clearly one of the fundamental problems of Vedic exegesis, which was responsible for a burgeoning difficulty within Hindu theology. Its greatest difficulty undoubtedly lay in its failure to interpret and if necessary reinterpret Puranic lore, that hermeneutical ventures might be sustained at significant levels. Dayananda's problems lay quite clearly in the historical circumstances which lethargic Hinduism had engendered. Mensching's view that the transition from folk to universal religion occurred in every major religion may be true. His view that it occurred in India in 800 B.C. in the era of the Upanishads is accepted but also confirms that apart

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from the involvement of people like Shankara and Ramanuja, Hindu theology has remained largely unproductive and unaffected by fundamental changes in human existence.

Talcott Parsons³ contends that in traditionalized higher cultures, religion tends to be mainly a conservative force; a balance wheel of society preventing departure from established ways. Dayananda's was the role of cleavage; from within the context of Hinduism it was necessary that stabilization had to be effected in terms of a totally new approach to an age old theological format. Max Weber⁴ believed that a traditional priestly class did not have great social power in classical Greece. This was a condition for Greek cultural activity. Conversely this social ascendancy of the Brahmin priestly caste in India before the coming of Dayananda is inseparable from the fact that Indian society is incontrovertably conservative and subsequently unyielding and unresponsive to creative theology.

The association of religion with the areas of social, economic and political stress and strain even at the deepest levels of human life makes it one of the main areas in which responses to situations are expected to be creative. Hindu society remains traditional and the traditions appear to be intermingled with tension and turmoil that remain largely unchanging. Dayananda's attempt at creative innovation for Hinduism and Hindu society has been a period of dynamic religious development as is evidenced by his work and influence upon it after his death. That this contributed to much social turmoil resulting in the deaths of many people through his advocating Shuddhi means that the peace the movement works for is unfortunately absent.

The foundations of the movement were well laid by Dayananda, setting followers within the task of orientating themselves to the visions of growth. The goals that Dayananda conceived and the values he supported are part of the programme the Samaj has now to follow and achieve. The keynote lies not in adaptation to emerging goals and values but mastery over them because of the very nature of religious activism. We shall see how the movement in South Africa achieves some mastery over the

situation/.....

situation. We commence by considering the theoretical basis of the movement, bearing in mind its national and international ramifications.

CHAPTER 1

THE VEDAS AS AUTHORITY FOR ARYA SAMAJ THEOLOGY

We commence by considering the fundamental philosophical basis upon which Swami Dayananda and the Arya Samaj movement built the Aryan edifice and the bedrock upon which was built the new Hinduism they advocated.

Dayananda was adamant about the authority of the Vedas and saw this authority in the context of the superordinate meaningfulness assigned to them as Holy Scriptures, revealed as many Hindu scholars believe, "by God to man at the dawn of creation".¹ Dayananda saw the four Vedas as the repository of knowledge and religious truth, the very word of God. They comprised what he referred to as the Samhita Mantra Bhag and were for him absolutely free from error and the "Supreme and independent authority in all things".² He saw them as "self authoritative" and so all other books were dependent on them for authority.³

Swami Dayananda's interpretation of the Vedas and the note he assigned to them as books of authority on Hindu life and thought is quite unique among teachers within the tradition. He assumed a most uncompromising stance on the nature of their authority; by seeing them as Supreme, Revealed Scriptures, the very fountain-head of the religious, cultural, educational, social and above all spiritual life of the Hindus. His single, most important and abiding intention was to formulate a philosophy and more correctly a theology that would confirm his belief in their supremacy and which would form the basis from which all other facets of life could find doctrinal expression. He therefore made the slogan "Back to the Vedas" a kind of battle cry, because he believed that since their revelation at the dawn of creation many men in the Indian tradition have been inspired by them and in ages yet to come many others would follow who would be similarly moved.⁴

It was Swami Dayananda's firm belief that the decay and rot of degenerative Hinduism came about as a result of a general failure on the part of Hindus to assert that the sruti texts should be

accepted as Divine authority.⁵ He believed that it was compromise with Smriti texts that was the bane of Hindu religious thought and that it was the single most disastrous cause of Hindu degeneration when it replaced the authority of the Vedas with less authoritative accretions of man made texts like the Mahābhārata and more especially the Puranas.⁶

In Swami Dayananda's work, in fact in his entire struggle for a restructuring and so a rejuvenation of Hindu life and thought, he emphasizes his conviction that a total misconception existed in the minds of Hindus concerning the role of scriptural authority. Dayananda's struggle centred around Hindu practices that represented some rather grotesque misconceptions of true religious behaviour. He set about his task of restructuring Hindu thinking by beginning with what he saw as the most glaring theological weaknesses and her obvious failure to assert the position of scripture within the Hindu doctrinal framework.

It is now one of the cardinal principles of the Arya Samaj movement that the authority of the Vedas is accepted without question. This assertion allows no compromise despite the long standing view that the Bhagavad Gita occupied the central position, the very core of Hindu thought in society for many centuries. Dayananda asserted that the Vedas were the supreme authority for all of Hinduism and no other scripture could occupy this position under any circumstances.⁷ Commentaries on the Vedas he said were dependent on the Vedas and therefore played a secondary role in scriptural exposition.⁸ They were therefore only acceptable if, and only if, they conformed to Vedic teachings and never were a substitute, nor ever were intended to be a substitute, for Vedic teachings or doctrinal authority.⁹

The Arya Samaj accepted as its third principle: viz.

"The Vedas are the scriptures of true knowledge. It is the first duty of the Aryan to read them, teach them, recite them and hear them being read."¹⁰

as one of its cardinal doctrines and makes acceptance of it a

basic/.....

basic rule for all who wished to be considered members of the Arya Samaj. All Arya Samajists are told of Swami Dayananda's belief that the Vedas are the books of true knowledge, hence it was the paramount duty of every Arya to read them. Swami Dayananda's work, the Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhumika, is an introduction to the Vedas aimed at facilitating Vedic study.

Swami Dayananda's views concerning the Vedas, although reflecting a traditional viewpoint are also unique. He is, for example, the only teacher to have referred to such works as the Brahmanas, the six Angas, the six Upangas, the four Upavedas, and the eleven hundred and twenty-seven Shakas as commentaries, entirely dependent upon the Samhita portion of the Vedas. Any passages in these works, he asserted, that contradicted the Samhita had to be summarily rejected.¹¹

Swami Dayananda's views on the Vedas differ considerably from other interpretations. The special emphasis he gives to aspects of Vedic teachings is not easily encountered in work by scholars better known outside India. Swami Nikhilananda, for example, says that the Vedas treat of two ideas which rational minds are expected to strive to realise.¹² These are material happiness abhyudeya and the highest good (nihsreyasa). Material happiness is obtained through the observance of ethical laws and worldly duties and the propitiation of the gods through offering of oblations and sacrifices. Gods were always personified forms of cosmic consciousness controlling human life. The highest good is said to transcend the casual law.

Hinduism traces its origin to the composition of the Vedas. The Vedas, as literary works, came into existence during the Vedic period which historians divide broadly into three parts:

- The Age of the Mantra
- The Age of the Brahmanas
- The Age of the Upanishads.¹³

The Mantras or hymns are the poetic compositions, the Brahmanas the ritualistic treatises and the Upanishads the mystical, or more correctly, philosophical aphorisms.

The division of the collection of writings into their various segments is the work of Vyasa who attempted a systematic presentation of the collection of hymns that previously constituted the entire work. Vyasa's success in dividing the Vedas into the four famous works called Rig Veda; Sama Veda; Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda is the first singularly important contribution to the heritage of literary Hinduism. Each of the Vedas was divided into the Mantras and Brāhmanas which constituted Jñāna Kānda. The Karma Kānda section has always been recognised among Hindu scholars for the worth of the Samhitas and Brāhmanas as poetic compositions and ritualistic treatises. The classification of the Jñāna Kānda was due to the contemplative and rationalistic bias engendered by the Aranyakas and Upanishads. These divisions do not represent any sequence in time, have always existed together as works representative of human inclinations and symbolise craving of the human mind for both religious consolation and material happiness.

Swami Dayananda's belief in the infallible nature of the teachings of the Vedas stems from the viewpoint held by Hindu scholars on the kind of scriptural authority they constitute. Swami Prabhavananda says that the Vedas represent Divine and inexpressible Truth itself.¹⁴ For this reason Hindus claim that the Vedas are divine in origin quite unlike the origin of either the Bible or the Koran.

Swami Dayananda says: "The Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda were produced by the Supreme and perfect Being, Parabrahman, who possesses the attributes of self-existence, consciousness and bliss, who is omnipotent and universally adored. The meaning is that the four Vedas are revealed by God alone."¹⁵ However, the point of departure arises from the Hindu contention that works of other religions owe their authority to the delivery of a sacred message, God's word, through a prophet or a messenger to the world at large. God's word was then to be accepted on faith by all who hear it. The Vedas on the other hand are said to be Apaurusheya, not of human composition and constitute a Divine Knowledge given by God to all men who strive for it. Swami Nikhilananda, quoting the great Upanishadic commentator

Sāyānācharya, says that God created the whole universe out of the knowledge of the Vedas.¹⁶ This is to say that Vedic knowledge existed even before the creation of mankind. Hence Swami Nikhilananda's contention that the primary meaning of the name Veda is supersensuous wisdom. He says that the secondary reference of the term Veda is to the words in which that knowledge is embodied.¹⁷ Swami Vivekananda says that by the term Vedas, no books are meant. They refer rather to the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by the Rishis of old at various times.¹⁸

The traditional Hindu view is that the Vedas constitute a religio-philosophical wisdom on the one hand and on the other the utterances in which that wisdom is preserved. The Vedas require no external agency to confirm their authority as scripture.¹⁹ They are themselves the authority, by virtue of their being the knowledge of God or as it is more frequently described "Eternal Truth". This truth is verifiable by any person who aspires to know it through transcendental consciousness.

Swami Dayananda says that the subject matter of the Vedas may be divided into four classes:²⁰ These are Vijnana (philosophy or metaphysics); Karma (action in general), Upasana (Communion with God) and Jñāna (knowledge in general). Of these Vijnāna takes precedence as it means realization in knowledge of all things, from God down to a blade of grass.²¹

Before commencing a discussion on the subject matter of the Vedas we consider the views of two former Arya Samaj scholars on the authority of the Vedas.²² "The Veda is a Sruti and not a Shastra: a Shastra is a text of systematized knowledge with a scientific terminology. The Sruti has the potential of becoming the source of a Shastra but by itself is not the Shastra". They contend as Dayananda did that for understanding the nature of the Sruti, the ancient Indian seers evolved a regular system of other scriptures such as Vedangas and so on.

The Hindus' knowledge of the universe is theoretically circumscribed by the teachings of the Vedas. To the Hindu creation

is beginningless and endless. God who contains within Himself the seed, the material cause of the universe brings forth the universe out of Himself, His own Being, and then in due course takes it back again, withdraws it into Himself. This process of creation and dissolution is endless and constitutes eternity which bears witness to a succession of such cycles of creation and dissolution.²³

As has already been observed the orthodox Hindu regards the Vedas as his highest written authority. Any subsequent scripture, if it is to be regarded as valid, must be in agreement with them. It may expand them, or develop them, but never contradict them. They are to him as perfect as any document can be because they are expressive of Divine Truth.

Swami Dayananda's study of the Vedas has been exhaustive. His work covers an extensive field as he sought always to confirm that they, and only they, form the highest authority on all matters religious and even on many matters secular. Dayananda says that God had ordained that man should acquire duly, "the Dharma preached by me (God) which is justly devoid of bias and partiality and refulgent with truthful characteristics."²⁴

His introduction to the commentary on the Vedas gives ample evidence of his enormous enthusiasm for propagating the idea that the Vedas were authoritative texts for study of subjects like astronomy, medicine, science, mathematics, shipbuilding, aircraft construction, telegraphy and several other interests. He says, for example, on the art of shipbuilding that, "A man desirous of possessing and enjoying wealth, riches, necessities of life, comforts and victory should fulfil his desires with the help of physical science. By constructing ships of wood, iron, etc. and by using fire and water (for generating steam for propulsion) he may make voyages on the seas backwards and forwards and in this way he may amass wealth."²⁵

Dayananda's difficulty with all the other sacred books of Hinduism is the difficulty of a vast number of Hindus who had to face the many criticisms levelled against them. Many of the

Puranas in particular were regarded by people like Griswold²⁶ and others as the crudest and grossest form of literary immaturity and much heartache accompanies every effort at scriptural study. It was his keen desire therefore that only the purest and best form of literary and religious excellence portrayed in some of the books of Hinduism should be read and regarded as holy scripture and for this reason was adamant that only the Vedas could stand up to close scrutiny and consideration. He has however been accused of blaspheming against the Srimad Bhagavatam.²⁷

Dayananda's contribution to the aspect of Hinduism dealing with its literary authority has been substantial. He has succeeded in focussing attention on this aspect of the faith and in so doing many theologians have looked again at the importance of scriptural texts as sources of authority for spiritual knowledge. The publication of the Vedas with English translation has since been increased and more people are now taking to Vedic study where previously this was almost unknown among most Hindus in every country in the world.

The impact of this belief in the authority of the Vedas on the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in South Africa has been so profound that sponsors in this country have been found who have committed themselves to sponsoring English translations of the Vedas at enormous costs. It has been estimated that the new edition of the Vedas will revolutionise religious study by focussing on this aspect of it in ways unknown in South Africa before.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY OF DIVINE REVELATION

Hindus believe that the Vedas are of Divine origin and were revealed to man, when he first sought to know Reality. The contents of the Vedas, referred to as Sruti, (what is revealed or known) are not subject to human composition and reflect an essential message Hindus believe to be the "Eternal Truth". Swami Vivekananda's view best epitomises this statement:

"The Hindus have received their religion through Revelation: the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning or end. By the Vedas are meant the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times."¹

All Hindus subscribe to the belief that the contents of the Vedas are not subject to human composition. Hence they are described as Apaurusheya. Swami Nikhilananda describes them in the following way: "The superconscious experiences of the ancient Hindu seers have been embodied in the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of Hinduism. The Hindus believe that the Vedas, containing truths regarding the soul, the universe and Ultimate Reality, are eternal, without beginning and not ascribable to human authorship. They are co-existent with the Creator and form the very basis of creation. These truths are revealed from time to time to the hearts of men and women purified by the practice of self control and meditation".² He continues that the Vedas deal with timeless truth, and are therefore said to be eternal.³ For this reason little if anything is known about the Rishis to whom these truths were revealed because these truths have always received greater attention than the personalities to whom they were revealed.

Swami Dayananda supports the contention that the Vedas were revealed to man by God.⁴ Revelation in his teaching is expressed as divine inspiration occurring in the lives of the great Vedic Rishis. His belief is that God imparts His knowledge to man, not

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through the use of any of the organs of speech but "has revealed knowledge to the soul by virtue of His being the innermost ruling spirit".⁵ For Swami Dayananda revelation hinges on the ideal of "uncovering" from within which is effected through God's incorporeality and His being present in man. He thus reveals His knowledge from within. This knowledge must be seen as being based in the Vedas wherein the first and original Revelation was effected. All subsequent revelations can only confirm for each man the Divine nature of his own being.

Persons thus illumined with such revelation have the task of imparting their knowledge to others. However, such knowledge is a preparation for the whole of revelation to occur in every man. Preparation through other religious disciplines is important, because God reveals the truth to such a man who has performed tapas, austerity. Such men are inspired through His being which is the spirit within every man.⁶ God to reveal His truth, the truth of His existence, needs no organ of speech. His revelation comes in the form of knowledge which enlightens man to the fact of Revelation.

The Vedas, Dayananda says are the original revelation to man at the beginning of man's life on earth. The knowledge of the Vedas are now a record for man's benefit and instruction. By study of the Vedas man becomes inspired in the way the Rishis were inspired and he thus becomes enlightened. For Truth to be made known to others, where no similar Revelation occurs, the necessity arises for man to spread Vedic truth by word of mouth. The uniqueness of the Vedas lies in the fact of their age and antiquity. It was Dayananda's firm belief that the original Revelation occurred at a particular time and place in history.⁷ For him verification of such revelation occurs in the logic of reason which affirms not only the possibility of such revelation but its actual occurrence. Vedic Revelation occurring as it did at a particular place and time is not indicative of any limitations set on it. To all men who wish to know the truth, to them will it be made known. Firstly the necessity of study becomes clear and alternately the possibility of Divine Revelation, becomes manifest.⁸

Swami Dayananda clung rather closely to his belief that the original Revelation as it occurred to the Rishis of Vedic times was necessary as it confirms that Vedic truth and revelation are "as old as mankind".⁹ The antiquity of the Vedas is a factor of their uniqueness. The significance of Dayananda's contribution to Hindu liturgy lies in his contention that Vedic truth is meant for all mankind. The Vedas, he believed, had to be studied by all irrespective of caste, sex, race or nation.¹⁰

A single difficulty that occurs in Dayananda's concept of the fact of revelation is that if a spiritual truth is to be made known, nothing is said of revelation as an occurrence within the mind of man. Unlike the view of the Apokalypsis as found in Christian thought in which some form of "uncovering", or "laying bare" occurs, Dayananda places little if any, emphasis on "enlightenment" or "making known" as might be found with Vedantic thought, hence the difficulty of understanding precisely the nature of revelation in the life of the common man.

However one fact becomes abundantly clear in the emphasis that Dayananda placed upon the study and knowledge of Vedic truth. His deepest concern lay in what he saw as the superstition and triviality of religious conception arising as he believed from the study of books like the Puranas which conveyed no truth or lofty religious conception.

Dayananda's primary intention for the Hindu cause in his country was to rid it of the superstition and malpractice with which it was plagued. In order to do this it was necessary to seek out a new theory and subsequently formulate a methodology of reform. Reform, he argued, lay in the Arya Samaj's ability to restore Hinduism to its original purity and to unite Hindus of every community, caste, sect and even language group into a common Hindu humanity. The divisions that plagued the country were symptomatic of the extreme lengths to which the country could go in neglecting the divine truths embodied in revealed scripture. His dream lay in uniting his people by infusing in them a sense of religious purpose and this he saw in the proclamation that Vedic Truth was the common heritage of all

Hindus, if not all mankind, and for those who could understand he propagated the belief that the revelation of the Vedas was their source of both material and spiritual success.¹¹

One of the first principles for his belief in the possibility of uniting Hindus to this belief was the fact that all the great Acharyas of Hinduism proclaimed the divinity of the Vedas and aspired towards the realisation of the Eternal Truths they taught. Thus Divine Revelation for Dayananda was not only the spiritual directive for Hindu enlightenment but also the basis for a national socio-political and cultural unity and regeneration.¹²

It was therefore necessary he believed, to lay the foundation for unity declaring that God's Revelation lay in the Samhitas (the mantra portion of the Vedas) and he saw that condemnation of the Puranas formed a convenient, corollary to this contention. His belief that the acceptance of scriptural authority of this kind extended to proclaiming that the Vedas did not sanction idolatry in any form. For Dayananda Vedic Revelation was the means for the religious salvation of the people of India. It was also the means and the basis for her social, economic and political salvation. He urged people wherever he went to study the Vedas, constantly reminding them that the degeneration one saw everywhere was due to the neglect of study of Holy scripture and that the panacea for all ills in the country lay in the acquisition of a new scientifically orientated education. Scientific knowledge he asserted had its roots in the Vedas for they contained within them much information of value to the science that young men yearned for.¹³

Dayananda's convictions were best expressed by himself when he said that "the eradication of iniquities is the end of my life".¹⁴ The Revelation that brought into existence the Vedas is the very revelation that makes possible salvation, "the state of emancipation from the endurance of pain, subjection to birth and death" which lead to "liberty and happiness in the immensity of God".¹⁵

The concept of revelation presupposes hidden truth. In Hindu law discovery of truth has led teachers to conclude that such

discovery is always possible. Not as an accident of fate but the consequence of disciplined striving. Thus "revelation" for all its technical implications stands subject to examination through Vedic study which enhances the ideal of making known the presence of God. But revelation in the Upanishadic sense extends beyond the realm of mental or sense experience.¹⁶

The Vedantic proposition on ultimate experience, centres on the contemplative ideal which culminates in a meditative awareness of the relation between sense experience and inward realisation. For Dayananda revelation was possible for man because God is the "innermost ruling spirit" who makes revelation possible from within the life of man.

Unlike many Catholic or even Protestant view points which affirm that Revelation is the disclosure of supernatural truths not attainable by reason,¹⁷ Dayananda tends to agree that thought and logical reasoning lend support to the ideal of striving after the knowledge God makes possible. The general consensus among Hindus focuses on the metaphysical proposition that revealed knowledge enables man to grasp at a higher truth until knowledge of the Supreme Truth becomes known. Dayananda saw Revelation in terms of social justice or as Luther expressed it "as the righteousness of God".¹⁸ Dayananda does not extend the ideal of Revelation as a necessary experience for all. The biblical usage reminds the faithful of their place as "hearers of revelation", meaning that those who hear the words of scripture such as the Old or New Testament shall have revealed to them the goodness and mercy of God. Dayananda's belief in the value of the Vedas may be understood as the plea for the possibility of revelation occurring at any time for God speaks to man through scripture at all times. Dayananda however insists that revelation can occur only to "truly holy persons". It would appear therefore that such revelation had once occurred in Vedic times does not occur in the same way among the generality of mankind, except under circumstances made possible by men's aspiration to the highest Truth.

Swami Dayananda's acceptance of the theory of revelation is contained in the teaching of the method by which revelation

takes place/.....

takes place. Revelation for Hindu mystics is usually synonymous with mystic introversion by which Truth and the understanding of it becomes known intuitively. Swami Dayananda agrees that verbalisation of Truth is necessary for the purpose of communication. When that Truth is imparted as in the case of a teacher communicating with a student, the verbalisation of a truth is both possible and necessary. But God's revelation to a man takes place because God is able to reveal such knowledge to the soul by virtue of His being present within it, a part of man's innermost being, the very soul which is the innermost part of man. "As God is incorporeal and all pervading He reveals this whole Vedic knowledge to the souls in virtue of His being within."¹⁸

Many scholars of Hinduism attempt during the course of their writings to establish the absolute infallibility of the Vedas. Attempts have often been made to establish the exact nature of their authority, arising as it does from the standpoint of their being revealed scriptures as opposed to merely inspired writings. The Arya Samaj movement has no specific doctrine as far as one is able to determine on the call to a specific type of religious obedience. Within the Arya Samaj movement no attempt is made to direct the spiritual calling in a way that would lead aspirants towards a doctrinal goal in the same way that movements like the Ramakrishna Centre, for example, make upon students. Clearly within such a movement specific directions are given by inspired men for spiritual aspirations to be pursued along a specific path and this path ultimately to lead to a goal of realisation that can be equalled to the receipt of revelation. The inspiration enjoyed by the Rishis of old which found culmination in the claims of Revelation, is an experience for all people who strive after such revelation though observing the rules of religious obedience.

Among the inspired teachers Patanjali was of the view that the words conveying the message of wisdom were not in themselves eternal, but the knowledge or ideas concerning Supreme Truth.

Hence the Vedas themselves while being looked upon as inspired

words/.....

words of God are in fact the means by which Sphota - Supreme Knowledge, is conveyed to man. Thus the Vedas, although carrying inspired words, are in fact carriers of spiritual truths affecting man through revealed or inspired knowledge, in ways unique to each person who strives for such knowledge.

The Vedas were not at first committed to writing. This happened only when the writing form became known, and even then when some inspired men saw the wisdom of committing them to writing. Most believed the words of the Vedas too sacred to write down. Written words became the property of all, whereas the Vedas ought only to be studied by inspired students studying under the direction of inspired teachers. The Vedas could make no claim to infallible authority because the words as language, used to convey Sphota, are themselves not infallible. The call to spiritual obedience is ever present, because it is inspired by discerning students. But revelation, Supreme Revelation, is reserved only for a select few whose spiritual struggle endows them with the gift of such revelation.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPT OF GOD

A traditional approach to the development of a full concept of God as "primary cause of all true knowledge", usually follows a course that traces such development from the earliest beginnings of religious thinking in India to the highest flights of religio-philosophical conceptualisations known. Swami Dayananda's approach circumvents this traditional development. He emphasizes numerous Vedic passages which he claims are clear on their conceptions and descriptions. In exploring what it means to "believe in God", consideration has to be given to the experiences Dayananda had and the serious implications they in turn had for formulating his beliefs and the theoretical conceptualisations that emanated from them. A discussion on Dayananda's investigations resulting in the Arya Samaj's religious phenomenology must be found in his "experiential dimension" as Ninian Smart¹ describes it.

While it may be true that Dayananda's emphasis on Vedic revelations was the basis for his conceptualisations, difficulties arise in reconciling these notions with the Upanishadic conceptualisation emphasized by people like Vivekananda and other notable authorities in Hindu thought, particularly Vedantins. In the Rig Veda, for example, a process of sublimation arises both from fear of and reverence for nature and the environment. Sri Krishna's words representative of God's in the Bhagavad Gita, echo a Vedantic sentiment: "I am the origin of all; from Me all (the whole creation) proceeds. Knowing this, the wise worship Me, endowed with conviction". X,8²

For the ancient Vedic Seers contemplation of nature appears to have been important. This was the initial outpouring of devotion which developed into reverence for things easily seen but not easily understood. Thus the glorious sun, a shining orb that rose each day to eliminate darkness and bring new light and life

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become Surya, the sun god. The receding darkness produced Varuna, a god of the night. This presence of practical needs, it becomes apparent, produces a commonplace of psychology as Griswold contends.³ Because primitive man found himself in an environment partly helpful and partly untoward and perilous his fear of or reverence for such phenomena as rivers, rain, fire and wind would dominate his thought and action. The process of personification led to the development of such notaries as "personal gods" and "special gods".

Swami Dayananda in acknowledging the existence of "extraordinary properties" in natural things condoned their objectification as Devatas, having qualities that elevate them to a higher status. Never, however, to the same status as God. In answer to the question: "Do you believe that the Veda talks of many Gods?" he emphatically answers: "There is no whisper of it in all the four Vedas".⁴ He then continues that "it is clearly written that there is but one God". There is a description of many 'devatas' in the Vedas. Anything having luminous properties is called devata, e.g. the earth, the sun, etc.⁵

The grandeur of nature thus evokes within the early Indian mind poetic conceptualisations of metaphysical Truth; their spiritual temperament coupled with meditative introspection produced a religious consciousness which enabled them to feel that the natural phenomena were expressions of celestial power. The Shatapatha Brahmana echoes the sentiment expressed in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III, IX, 1-3). Vivagdha the student asks of Yajnavalkya his teacher, "How many in fact are the gods O, Yajnavalkya?" Each time the question was posed a modified answer was given in descending order beginning with, three hundred and three and three thousand and three to thirty-three, six, three, two, one and a half and one. Vivagdha's question finally prompted Yajnavalkya's more comprehensive response on gods, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Adityas, fire, earth, the sky, the sun, moon, heaven and stars.⁶ They are called Vasus because they enable men to live on earth. Swami Dayananda affirms the traditional answer which accepts that the eight Vasus are the

abode of creatures, the eleven Rudras the vital forces within the body, the twelve Adityas, the signs of the Zodiac and one Prajapati the lord of creatures, which divides into two, prana and akāsha (energy and matter).⁷ He however contends that the one God is "Lord of all these objects and the greatest of all; the One infinite and Inexpressible Supreme Power". It thus became an article of faith in the Arya Samaj movement not to reject the description of the Shathapatha Brahmana but to recognise it as the multifarious description of the One Supreme Being.

The Arya Samaj movement under Swami Dayananda's direction has accepted as its First Principle, God as the source of all knowledge: "God is the primary source of all true knowledge and of all that is known by its means".⁹ Arya Samaj commentators refer to this as the Primordial Root, the Eternal Unseen sustainer, the source of all true knowledge and of objects made known by true knowledge. They saw this principle as the first enunciation of a theistic outlook. God they declare is the first teacher who inspired the knowledge that man now has as a result of this revelation through the Vedas. His Being is distinct from His creation because he manifests Himself through it, and also because of His caring for and communication with mankind.

The second principle reads: "God is existent, conscious, all beatitude, formless, just, merciful, unbegotten, infinite, unchangeable, beginningless, incomparable, the support of all, the Lord of all, All-pervading. Omniscient and Controller of all from within, ever mature, imperishable, fearless, eternal and Creator of the Universe. To Him alone worship is due."¹⁰

To God are ascribed the qualities of Sat , Chit, Ananda, (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.) He thus endows Himself with the gifts that enable Him to participate in Love and care for humans and all life on earth in a way no other being can. God is described by Dayananda as incorporeal, one and formless, hence free of the possibility of all iconographic representation or even misrepresentation.¹¹

"The Vedas teach the worship of One God who is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent Lord of the universe."¹² The Atharva Veda (Mandala X, Chap. XXIII, Mantra 38), says:

"He who is the most exalted of all, who is worthy of being adored by all, who pervades the entire universe, the Omniscient Being, who supports the firmament, who survives the dissolution of the world into its primary atoms, even He is Brahman."¹³

Among the famous hymns of the Rig Veda are the Purusha Sukta and the Hiranyagarbha Stotram. The Arya Samaj has selected several stanzas of the Hiranyagarbha Stotram for chanting at all ritual ceremonies, because it is accepted that all Arya Samaj ritual is accompanied by the performances of the havan. Several of the mantras are selections from Hiranyagarbha Stotram. At least one is taken from the Isa Upanishad which Swami Dayananda regarded as secondary in importance.¹⁴ The mantra is the eighteenth stanza of the Isa Upanishad and is well known to all Hindus.

The thirteenth mantra of the first section of Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad reads: "The Self luminous reality is one without a second and is the Creator of heaven and earth". A stanza more acceptable to Arya Samaj chanting and therefore belief is stanza eighteen:

"Having pervaded the worlds and the created beings and all the quarters and intermediate quarters, the first-born of Brahman known as Prajāpati or Hiranyagarbha became by His own nature Parabrahman, the ruler and protector of individual souls." ¹⁵

Section one, stanza 12 of the Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad reads:

"This Self luminous Lord renowned in the scriptures pervades all the quarters of heaven. Having been born as Hiranyagarbha in the beginning He indeed is inside the universe represented as the womb. He alone is the manifold world of creation now springing into existence and causing the world of creation yet to come. As one having face everywhere, He dwells also as the innermost self leading all creatures." ¹⁵

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These specific stanzas chosen for chanting are selected on the basis of their having no direct reference to God as manifesting this universe from Himself. Hence they do not propound the Vedantic viewpoint.

Swami Dayananda insisted that the ancient Aryans accepted the oneness of God and that the worship of numerous gods and goddesses was introduced in later times. The various names such as Agni, Vayu, Surya, Aditya which occur in the Vedas are worshipped through various names. His struggle was centred against Puranic Hinduism so prevalent in his day and the struggle to reinstate study of the Vedas as basic scriptures.¹⁶ Dayananda was of the view that because man is finite and limited he could have no adequate conception of the Divine Spirit, the infinite power behind all thought and life. Because he was all pervading and transcendent man's reverence for God had to take account of the fact that direct perception was difficult. He was however perfect and filled with justice and compassion.

He rejected the doctrine of the personality of God because to him this meant earthy, material limitations. His endeavour was therefore strongly directed at showing that the Vedas condemned idolatry in every form.¹⁷ The monotheistic tradition was thus firmly laid within the Arya Samaj movement but much may be said for this being a purely reactionary phenomenon. Not much can be said for the way monotheism was ultimately substantiated and finally vindicated within the movement.¹⁸

A strong criticism that is levelled against Swami Dayananda is his seeming inability or refusal to take a more comprehensive view of the conflicting theological positions in the India of his day. While students have for long borne witness to the dichotomy of theological stance between the followers of Shankara and the Advaitic school against Ramanuja and the Vishishtadvaita tradition, many a scholar is in a position to see no conflict between them but viewpoints that merit attention in more than one way. A true spiritual aspirant in Hindu tradition has the duty always to reconcile all viewpoints because Truth involves a comprehensive outlook on life.

From this position stems the belief in the validity and truth of all world religions. It is in this respect however that Swami Dayananda's position gave way to some justifiable criticism.

The charge is also laid that if stanzas from Hiranyagarbha stotram are chosen for chanting, they ought to be selected as a starting point which ultimately could lead to understanding and acceptance of such stanzas as for example:

Katha Upanishad: II, iii, 14.¹⁹

When all desires clinging to one's
heart fall off, then a mortal becomes
immortal and one attains Brahman here.

And finally the depth of significance that lies in the sloka of the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita:

"Through devotion he comes to know Me,
what My measure and who I am in truth;
then having knowing Me in truth, he
forthwith enters into Me".²⁰

The Mundaka Upanishad says in II, ii, 11

"This world is nothing but Brahman."²¹ Shankara in his commentary on this sloka says: "All ideas of non-Brahman are but ignorance like the idea of the snake superimposed on a rope. Brahman alone is the Supreme Truth. This is the declaration of the Vedas".²²

Swami Dayananda found it difficult to reconcile this passage with the experience of suffering. Upadhyaya says:²³ He believes in a spiritual principle as the basis of the world, which is not treated as an illusion. For while Brahman is eternally free from all imperfection, matter is unconscious and the individual souls are subject to ignorance and suffering. So Dayananda stands diametrically opposed to all suggestions that the Advaita position may find reconciliation in his beliefs. He says emphatically:

"Three things are eternal, namely God,
Soul and Prakrit - the material cause
of the universe. They are also known
as eternal substances. Being eternal,
their essential qualities, their func-
tions and their natures are eternally
the same".²⁴

The oft quoted Vedic passage is acknowledged by Swami Dayananda to be one of the most crucial as it stands as a counter argument to the accusation that Hindus believe in many gods. The Rig Veda I, 164, 46 reads: "They call Him, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and He is heavenly, nobly winged Garutman. He is one, sages call Him by many names."

Several other passages contribute to the notion concerning the unity of God as an Infinite Being who is referred to through the many deities described in the Vedas. The sublimity of ideas however have to find culmination in the notion of one Supreme Being. Swami Dayananda however accepts the Sankhya tradition by acknowledging dualistic concepts of God and soul. "Both God and Soul are eternal", says Sharda reiterating Swami Dayananda's acceptance of the twin concepts of God and Soul as separate entities in addition to Prakriti. Their respective natures he saw as eternal, also having separate attributes.²⁵

Two of the most powerful institutions founded in India as a result of the existence of two great teachers are the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna movement. They are however diametrically opposed in several areas of doctrine. Concerning the concept of God Dayananda accepts God and Soul as separate entities both having eternal existence. He is also adamant that God is infinite, bodiless and immortal and therefore can never manifest Himself on earth, as the doctrine of the Avatar submits. This stands in direct contradiction to the statement by Sri Ramakrishna in the form acknowledged by his disciples.²⁶ Dayananda says "God is immaterial and formless".²⁷ Had He been material and with definite form another Being would have been necessary to supply Him with the physical qualities He would need to take birth in human form on earth. Dayananda says that "if it be urged that God made His own body himself out of His will and desire, it is replied that it only proves the thesis, that He was immaterial before the formation of His body". Hence concludes Dayananda God can never assume human form but instead is the uncaused cause, immaterial and invisible cause of all material objects of the world.

Swami Dayananda's understanding of Vedic philosophy stands in

sharp contrast to the Upanshadic philosophy interpreted within the Ramakrishna movement. He makes no distinction for example between what Nikilananda refers to as the two-fold access to all knowledge: one lower derived through sense-organs and corroborated by varied evidence based upon sense experience. The other higher knowledge, transcendent and realised through vigorous spiritual discipline.²⁸

The subject matter of Upanishadic enquiry is Brahman. As used in the Upanshads Brahman is Absolute, transcending time, space, cause, result, not to be comprehended by the human intellect and not to be described in words. The unitive knowledge of religious science in the Hindu tradition is Brahma vidya, knowledge of Brahman. Swami Dayananda disagrees.²⁹

Thus those aspects of philosophical Hinduism which seem to have made a great impact upon students taking a more enlightened interest in Hindu thought are amenable to discussing, for example, the core of Yajnavalkya's teachings in the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad. "You cannot see that which is the seer of seeing, that which is the hearer of hearing; you cannot think that which is the thinker of thought and you cannot know the knower of knowledge."³⁰

Brahman is the term used in Hindu philosophical search for numerous descriptions of the concept of God. The compound term Sat-chit-Ananda comes close to acceptance of a determinative conceptual factual ideal. Thus Brahman as the First Principle is a unitive basis pervading the universe and yet remains beyond it. Swami Dayananda's dualistic concept differs radically from this traditionally accepted view. He describes men and animals in the observable world as possessing a reality which cannot be denied. "Souls and nature are not like Brahman; they are inferior to it." He asserts more emphatically: "Therefore, it is proved that Brahman is always one, and the souls and elements existing in nature are many".³¹

Belief in God has often been characterised as primarily involving the cultivation of particular attitudes towards reality, specified by a community of faith, which maintains a set of

traditions, rites and practices in which the believer participates. Dayananda's confrontation with two foreign monotheisms, Islam and Christianity also meant a certain respect for some aspects of their teachings. He noticed that each had a compact and definite creed and concluded that unless Hinduism developed its own, it was only a matter of time before they won the day and annihilated the ancient faith.³²

Part of what it means to believe in God is participation in rites and ceremonies. This means that even if they don't bring fulfilment in liberation at least they hold to a promise of liberation. It is therefore proper to establish central characteristics on the purpose of religious belief.³³ Dayananda found it necessary to enunciate his belief with the highly emotive calling: "He who is called Brahm the Most high, who is Paramatman or the Spirit, who permeates the whole universe, who is Truth, Intelligence and Happiness; whose nature, attributes and doings are holy, who is omniscient incorporeal, all pervading, unborn, infinite, almighty, just and merciful; who is the author of the universe; its protector and destroyer, who weighs the merits and demerits of individuals according to requirements of absolute justice, Him, I believe to be the Lord of Creation."³⁴

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPT OF MAN, CASTE AND SOCIAL VALUES

It was for Swami Dayananda, as it was for his better known contemporary Swami Vivekananda, a matter of very deep concern that there should develop in India a reorientation in thinking on the social values that dominated Indian society for many centuries. No social values however were worth following, Dayananda concluded, if they were not rooted in Vedic religiosity. Roman Rolland says of him: "Dayananda transformed into the languid body of India his own formidable energy, his certainty, his lion's blood. He reminded the secular passivity of a people, too prone to bow to fate, that the soul is free and that action is the generator of destiny."¹ For a man like Dayananda Indian social values as they were understood by a vast number of illiterate people, had to receive drastic overhauling. This however had to occur from its very roots. The fundamental problems, he believed lay in the age old beliefs and practices which the vast majority of people accepted with almost unthinking inheritance. In his travels in parts of the country Dayananda witnessed aspects of religious practice which raised his scorn, but above all his deep-rooted commitment to institute changes of the most drastic kind.

Quite clearly the most horrendous features of Indian life were abundantly evident in the iniquitous caste system. For a total change to be effected in this, Dayananda concluded that the very root of the problem lay in the almost incalculable misunderstanding that existed in the minds of the people about religious values and the social system they engendered. For a drastic change to be effected there was need firstly to return to a better understanding of the true law of God as embodied in the true scriptures of India, and from there to nobleness in every man who followed the principles of Truth and justice.

For Dayananda man was a part of creation. And creation was, "That which results from a combination of primary elements

compounded together consistently with a thorough and complete knowledge of the distinctive properties of every separate element and with all the perfection of design in all its infinite variety".² Creation for him as an entity possessed of eternal existence. Its roots were found in Prakriti, the material cause of the universe which existed for the purpose of assisting the soul in its onward march to enlightenment. For Dayananda man is a Soul possessed of eternal quality and together the three external substances God, Soul and matter acted in combination for mutual benefit.

Dayananda believed that creative energy, sometimes analogous to a play in its manifest form, was the natural exercise of the energy of God. God expresses Himself in His creative energy. The purpose of creation was the essential expression of God's creative energy. And creation had one fundamental purpose apart from its own manifest creativity. This was to provide the field whereby Souls could enjoy action and the fruits of that action. Souls, Dayananda believed, are tied to creation through ignorance. Thus man is a part of creation because as a man he is subject to ignorance and action. But action may be purposeful or it may not be. The only distinct form of action that bears consideration is purposeful action by which man frees himself from the bonds of ignorance and ultimately attains salvation. Purposeless action is action that perpetuates bondage and bondage is subjugation to eternal creation.³

Man is lead through ignorance to worship things other than the Creator and obscures his intellectual faculties from which pain and suffering result. Ignorance is termed bondage as it involves man or more correctly the Soul of man in pain which man by natural instinct wishes to escape. It is however his lot to suffer pain. And pain is the catalyst necessary for salvation. The emancipation of the soul from pain and suffering of every description, its enjoyment unleashed by the gross physical body to produce a career of freedom in the all-pervading God and His immense creation for a stated period and its resumption of earthly life after the expiration of that period is termed Salvation.⁴

The means of salvation are worship of God and contemplation of His nature and attributes with concentrated attention, the practice of virtue, a thorough control over the passions during the period of study, association with the wise and learned, love of true knowledge, purity of thought and active benevolence. Man is allowed to acquire wealth (artha). This is a cardinal principle that says man is entitled to enjoy wealth attained by honesty and fair dealings. Kāma or enjoyment of sense pleasure is possible as it enables man to experience true pleasure through uprightness and honesty.

Dayananda maintains a very strict dualistic position asserting that those who believe in ~~non~~-duality "sleep on the rosy bed of ignorance", because "the soul is finite and limited in knowledge" while the supreme Being is infinite, all-pervading and omniscient"⁵. Dayananda holds the view that birth, death and suffering are characteristic of the soul hence God and man are fundamentally separate beings. Ignorance appears in the teachings of Dayananda as fundamental to man's own understanding of himself, so if emancipation is to come it has to be steeped in eliminating ignorance which covers the soul of man. The soul is however free to act in the performance of its duties, subject only to the laws of God.⁶

However, while it is in the power of God to create the world, preserve it and if necessary destroy it, while yet maintaining it through natural law, man is not a duplicate creator. Being separate from God, he follows a law different to that of God. As man he propagates his own species and maintains a duty and a responsibility to offspring. He is subject to laws either good or evil. Man's will is therefore subject to desire. Man is distinct from God by the nature of his own qualities like pain, emotion, pleasure, joy, sadness, knowledge, etc. Man is a soul bent on a specific course of development and so long as the soul of man inhabits a body, so long will man's duties be directed to discovering the laws of God and manifesting the light of the soul.⁷

This manifestation begins with moral, ethical and spiritual

discipline. In his views on education Dayananda prescribes rules of behaviour for young people which he extends to adults who follow a strictly religious life.⁸

The religious disciplines he advocates are seen in the light of his contention that "God pervades the soul." For this reason it is possible for man to develop qualities of nobleness because his relationship with God is enhanced by the fact that this relationship is extended by God's "adoration" and love which establishes bonds similar to those between a father and son or master and servant. Thus a union, a kind of similarity, that culminates in fellowship between man and God is established. Similarity between them is marked by *Sādharmya*, (similar qualities) and *anvayabhava* (necessary connection) that does not imply the *advaitic* union, but a condition that perpetuates unity while yet maintaining a clear distinction and separateness. God's presence is marked by ubiquity and man's presence by finite limitations.⁹

Man's role in life is to observe and obey God's commandments which involve avoiding all forms of irreligious behaviour and to follow devotion to Him through discipline and introspection, following the rules and righteousness and justice. These will ultimately lead to salvation which means, "Living in God, Being in God, maintaining individuality while yet being pervaded by Him".¹⁰

All mankind belonged in the beginning to one caste. Afterwards, according to the *Rig Veda* and *Atharva Veda* man was divided into Aryas or noble people and Un-aryas or ignorant people. Noble and virtuous people were called Aryas, the learned were *devas*. The rest were ignorant, low, vicious.¹¹ A later division occurred which brought into existence from among Aryas themselves a four-fold classification of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The caste structure became in the course of time a degenerate system. It had begun, however, with some men struggling hard to attain the qualities of nobility as is proved by *Aryavarta* enjoying prosperity and progress through the birth of sages, philosophers, princes, emperors.¹² It was always

inevitable that a form of rigidity in caste would result and the ultimate fossilised condition of the whole caste system would degenerate into an obnoxious social order.

However, Dayananda believed that a Brahmin child is a Brahmin child because his parents are Brahmins. But nothing prevents non-Brahmins from becoming Brahmins, as is clearly illustrated in the Chandogya Upanishad which cites the example of Jabala of unknown parentage attaining to Brahminhood. Or as the Mahabharata points out that Vishvamitra was regarded as a Brahmin despite his Kshatriya heritage, and Matanga first being a Chandala¹³ then a Brahmin. Caste merit becomes the cornerstone of Dayananda's philosophy concerning the social order of India. Only he deserves to be a Brahmin, says Dayananda, who has acquired the best knowledge and character while an ignorant person is fit to be a Shudra. A Brahmin is not classified according to genetic inheritance but by his acts of righteousness.¹⁴

Dayananda believed that man in society had many duties to perform. These fell into four orders. In essence priests were men of prayer. Those who kept the body clean, purified the will by the practice of truth, the vital spirit by knowledge and devotion through study of philosophy. Those who thus wished to be regarded as Brahmins had to follow no less than fifteen categories of duties ranging from study and practice culminating in faith and belief in the Veda, God and Salvation. The duties of a Kshatriya are listed under eleven categories ranging from protection of people to behaving with respect to all. These duties Dayananda extracted from the laws of Manu and the Bhagavad Gita apart from the Vedas. The duties of merchants or Vaishyas were to care for the poor and by means of their acumen to bring prosperity to the land by careful investment. The only duty of a shudra is to be of service while shunning slander, envy, pride and all other evil habits.¹⁵

For Swami Dayananda the distinction between men, as outlined by the caste concept is made partly by God. Hence a distinction between one and another is part of natural law.¹⁶

Just as man is distinguished from birds and animals so too are some men distinguished from others by virtue of their character, their thoughts and meritorious deeds. They are thus also concerned through many other considerations such as the food they eat, the clothes they wear and the company they keep. Thus all men have the right to aim at achieving the noblest standards of behaviour from which would emanate their achieving noble characters. All men achieve nobility by studying the Vedas and attaining to the heights of the spiritual glory they exemplify.¹⁷

Men of all castes are men who suffer the same pains and enjoy the same delights. Great men have great cares and common people have little anxiety. But all men are subject to the same laws that determine how joy and sorrow and pain and suffering may be experienced. It is just God who gives to all men their just deserts. It is therefore right to believe that the present life and all existing circumstances are in perfect accord with the consequences of the deeds done in previous lives, and the future will be regulated by the consequences done in the present life.

However, Dayananda continues, "if you compare the pleasure and pain of the world, happiness many times exceeds pain and many pure souls earn the bliss of salvation by constant practice of virtuous actions."¹⁸ All pain has a benign purpose behind it. Swami Dayananda believed that man has his life rooted in Truth hence by following rules such as the laws of Manu his ethical principles enable him to transcend the laws of caste and attain to the height of righteousness that is steeped in goodness. God is all that is good, for Goodness is equivalent to God. God is the ideal embodiment of Truth, mercy, kindness, justice and perfect morality. He is the ethical ideal.¹⁹

The roots of a good society lie in the training and ethics afforded its young people. The young should grow into respectable men and women with profound knowledge of religious values. Religious values direct men in social values and only social values embellished by the virtues of Vedic culture could have any purpose for India and the Indian people.

Hinduism has always taught that the four Parusharthas are the ideal goals of life for all Hindus. Swami Dayananda's belief was that artha and kāma are legitimate desires circumscribed by ethical considerations. He says however that wealth is something earned with honesty, justice and fair dealing. Therefore kāma or true enjoyment is that which combines fruit of uprightness of principle and honestly acquired wealth. Add these to the age old system of caste and we have a model for all people in their recognition of the need for striving for the highest merits of behaviour which enable them to reach the highest caste.

Thus for Dayananda, the strong emphasis he laid on ethics, was proof of his determination to stamp out corruption which featured so often in Indian life. Upadhyaya²⁰ contends that ethics deals with the actions of man and found that Dayananda's ethics was a protest against many prevailing notions of society. He believes that Dayananda was opposed to several of the notions, held by Rationalist philosophers or even pragmatists but contends that Dayananda's views echo similarities in the work of William James.

Dayananda believed strongly in the freedom of choice of the individual in his social responsibilities. It was therefore necessary to account for the implications of the doctrine of kāma. Radhakrishnan says²¹ that the demand for freedom must reckon with a universe that is marked by order and regularity. Past karma enables us to live and work within the confines of conditioned actions as they are responses to Karmic law. But freedom of choice in every action enables us to live within the confines of free will while yet being allowed to conduct action as moral and spiritual law dictates. So if social action is to meet standards we consider religiously beneficial we have to live religiously. In the light of those needs of society, its moral integrity and above all the possibilities of building a society enjoying the highest goodness, we become individually strong within religious reckoning.

For this reason, Dayananda finds that the starting point of all

action, including social action, is man. Society he contends is a collection of individual units and not, as others might contend, an organic whole. Thus he places a vast responsibility on individual action. He therefore contends²² that the excellence of royalty is derived from the honesty of intentions, the superiority of qualities, the justice of action, freedom from partiality, the maintenance of morality within social order, paternal affection for subjects and perseverance in satisfying their needs and striving for genuine improvement.

It becomes clear all the time that Dayananda's deep concern for the social regeneration of Indian society had its roots in his seeing many pernicious practices in his country. He found the country broken by castes and found it difficult to reconcile this system of social behaviour with many of the notions, in fact the fundamental assertions concerning the religious life of man found in the Vedas. It therefore became a focal point of his teachings to wipe away many of the social practices that lay with the people. His efforts at reforming Hindu society took into account all the social practices he saw in India. He instituted into the Arya Samaj movement not only a condemnation of certain practices but a rigorous effort to remove them from the socio-religious scene. Among them were some ritual ceremonies like Shrādhā. This ceremony was conceived as a compulsory ritual to ensure the salvation of the deceased. He saw no logic in the practice and even less in its belief. This particular ceremony gave rise to a subsequent practice which called for caste dinners in memory of the dead. Needless to say the enormous expenses, time and effort necessary for a practice that had no religious basis, he ruthlessly condemned and called for its removal. It was Dayananda that called for the abolition of child marriages and also seriously advocated the removal of the ban on widow marriage, which perpetuated widowhood. He called for the removal of the obnoxious dowry system, the barter system in girl's marriage and also the status of perpetual dependency and inferiority accorded to women.²³

While it was true that Swami Dayananda had made outstanding contributions to the regeneration of Hindu society by calling

for a removal of many social practices he saw as evil because they had no Vedic basis or authority, it was the Shuddhi practice with which he was most deeply concerned. He therefore advocated the starting of a campaign to institute a movement of change. Only a short while after he advocated this practice thirty-five people who had been converted to Islam were reconverted to Hinduism in a formal ceremony that Dayananda conceived and advocated. This was later followed by the reconversion to Hinduism of Hindus who had been converted to Christianity.²⁴

It was in many areas of social reform that Dayananda worked tirelessly. In the years following, his preaching out against many of the pernicious practices made the Indian government become aware of the need for reforms and assisted by legislating against them. It is thus in the area of social reform that Dayananda's contribution to the reform of Hindu society had been recognised and many Acts of Parliament helped to stem the decay that was so evident during the years of his childhood.²⁵ While it is true that these had no direct relevance to South Africa's Hindu community, they had a very serious affect upon the thinking of Hindus here which enabled them to remain vigilantly opposed to practices that may have found a way into local thinking and behaviour.

CHAPTER 5

CONCEPT OF PURPOSE AND GOAL OF LIFE

The study of the life and work of Swami Dayananda leaves one with the unmistakeable view that his founding of the Arya Samaj movement was to resuscitate and rejuvenate among his people their knowledge of the Vedic gospel. When he separated from his guru, Swami Virjananda, he left with the promise that he would consecrate his life to the annihilation of many heresies that have crept into the Vedic faith, but above all, "to disseminate the truth".¹ The founding of the Arya Samaj was in a sense a response to the promise made by Dayananda to his guru to re-establish Vedic truth in India. For Vedic Truth, a study of it, practice of it and above all an understanding of it was the single spurt necessary for the re-establishment of righteousness and religious endeavour in the land. The founding of the Arya Samaj was aimed at re-establishing in the minds of all noble people what the true purpose and goal of life was.

Vaidyanath Shastri says, "Here it can be also unequivocally said that the aim of the human quest is to clear out and express the mystery of life and existence."² He believes that the "Will and Wisdom of the Creator prevails everywhere in the Universe and the human consciousness has the task of penetrating the mystery of these two experiences."²

For Swami Dayananda all people are born into worldly bondage and have experienced misery and pain. However, all of life is not characterised by pain. For both God and the soul are intelligences. The nature of man is holy, immortal and righteous.³ God, however, has the task of creating, preserving and destroying the world keeping all things in their respective spheres and subjecting them to laws, reward and punishment.

But for man the enigma of life is still one of his primary concerns. All of human life is irrevocably interrelated with his religious life. The enigma arises from the experience of pain and from it he wishes to experience God which he is lead

to believe is the fountainhead of bliss. Indian life has always been filled with belief that God is ananda, bliss. The soul in its nature is pure and endowed with consciousness and is immortal. These characteristics and qualities it shares with God. It is however ignorance that binds the soul to the mortal body. This ignorance is not of a permanent nature and can be moved if man takes the trouble to do so. It has free will which when exercised could give it an understanding of how the soul may be freed of its encumbrances. This however involves the soul in a cycle of growth leading to birth, death and rebirth.

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For Gautama the Buddha, life was characterised by pain. For Patanjali life was characterised by five kinds of pain. In his Yoga sutras he mentions them as avidya, (nescience) asmita, (egotism) raga (attachment) dvesha (aversion) and abhinivesha (clinging to life). These five causes of pain are the real causes of suffering because they arise from ignorance about their specific purpose. Man's inability to recognise them in their entirety is cause for pain of various kinds. Pain is also mixed with pleasure because many pleasurable experiences are known to end in pain. Sometimes brilliant sportsmen are paralysed in accidents or brilliant students enjoy outstanding periods of study but are robbed of life at the moment they embark on careers. Man's experience of pain arises from a wide variety of sources.

Indian philosophy searches out and presents the best possible explanations for the experience of pain. Suffering may have a value or purpose for only the experience of suffering and pain can lead to an ultimate transcendence of suffering. For philosophy ananda or absolute bliss is projected as not only a goal but a supreme end where man becomes the enjoyer or experiencer of greatest bliss. But Ananda or Bliss absolute is experienced when pain is ultimately transcended.

Swami Dayananda, however, qualifies the experience of pain by all men. He is of the view, unlike the Buddha, that all of life is not characterised by pain. He regards life as being

subject to pain in only limited spheres. He says in Satyarth Prakash that if the pain and suffering of the world can be compared with the amount of pleasure found in it, the experience of pleasure may be seen to exceed it in great measure.⁵ He extends this to include the ideals of Truth and Righteousness and divergence from these eternal and inherent gifts of God he regards as temporary. Man is by nature Truthful because he is born of Truth; he is more righteous by nature and has the fortune also at most times of his life to experience joy and pleasure.

Thus pain and suffering are temporary though very necessary experiences. And this experience of both pleasure and pain are but a fundamental part of the purpose of existence for it is here that man learns his greatest lessons on the purpose of suffering. The purpose behind both pleasure and pain is the same. Pleasure and pain are not the direct outcome of one's actions in the same way that cause is related to effect. Pleasure and pain are the result of action. Hence all actions are generally aimed at the experience of pleasure while avoiding pain.

For Dayananda life is filled with the hope of freedom from suffering because it has been created by a Righteous Being. He sees the righteous Being as one grounded in Truth. Hence it became a fundamental principle that all Arya Samajists ought to adhere to the principles of Truth and give up untruth. "That person is just who on due consideration of things adopts truth and relinquishes falsehood, protects the just and expels the unjust".⁶

Life itself sometimes makes a calling upon some people who could well see their specific roles in society against the backdrop of intense religious struggle or even cursory adherence to a life of religious interest. All men are not similarly endowed and thus are forced to follow a calling best suited to their specific temperaments. Thus those who join the grhastha ashrama or householder's station in life are expected to fulfil

all of life's calling such as accumulation of wealth, knowledge, strength and honour in society. The harmonious development of the physical body leads to mental equipoise and from it one is given the opportunity to work for one's own improvement and the betterment of one's fellow beings in many walks of life. For those who wish to follow a life of intense religious struggle, there is every sanction of it. All that life demands is that it must be rooted in righteousness and truth. Such an adherence makes for the spiritual advancement we all seek. Thus for Dayananda spiritual growth does not necessarily imply adherence to a life of asceticism. For Dayananda a life of asceticism is equal in value to a life of a householder for each is equally noble. Dayananda, unlike his contemporary Vivekananda, regarded grahastha ashrama as the highest station in life,⁷ because it is during such a period of life where worldly tests are greatest and man experiences his greatest pain in such worldly tests. The life of a renunciate is considerably easier because he confines himself to a limited sphere of worldly intercourse and so limits his exposure to worldly ways and possible suffering.

Either way, a man commits himself to a life of duty and duty for Dayananda is duty towards one's fellow beings. The sixth principle of the Arya Samaj reads:

"The prime object of Arya Samaj is to do good to the world. That is to ameliorate suffering in the physical, spiritual and social conditions of all men." 8

and the seventh principle reads:

"No one should remain contented with his own well-being but on the contrary, he should regard his well-being as lying in the well-being of others."8

In the tenth principle the Arya Samaj accepts that the well-being of society is of greater importance than the well-being of one person.

The altruistic goals that the Arya Samaj sets itself obviously stem from the teachings of Swami Dayananda. He believes that "the purpose of creation is the manifestation of the creative attribute, function and nature of God".⁹ God's creative power is recognised by His creating the universe for the purpose of man's salvation. His universe, however, exists in accordance with the perfect design He introduced into His creation. His creation implies the cause of bondage for individual souls. His creation is the subtraction of ignorance and release from such ignorance is the highest goal for man. Prarthana or prayer is an act of soliciting God for the grant of that which may be attained in communion with God.¹⁰

It stands to Dayananda's credit that the ideal of such striving has been carried through to the upper echelons of society where the highest tiers of government have been influenced into accepting some of the virtues he advocated. The inner character of man is his realisation of his ability to attain to the highest perfection which he advocates also for all of society. He states: "A state flourishes only as long as men are righteous. It perishes when men fall into vice".¹¹ The character of people is tied to the character of their government. Their government is in many ways a reflection of the goals and achievements of the nation of people they govern.

Swami Dayananda believes that the goal of life is the attainment of salvation. Salvation he says is release from pain and emancipation from bondage.¹² Bondage is due to ignorance.¹³ Man is born into this world to experience suffering. His ignorance of his own duties both secular and religious are the cause of suffering but as soon as he realises the need for communion and the proper way to enter into it, he gains the adequate means of earning his salvation and emancipation from bondage. Salvation means earning a place in God, entering into God, being a part of God. This state of being in God is a state of blessedness which lasts for a fixed period of time, before birth in the world is again effected.

The means of salvation is communion with God, through the practice of Yoga, strict observance of religious rites and principles and then the attainment of the knowledge of God by study through observing the rules of chastity and celibacy, associating with learned men and ardent perserverance in the religious life through righteous conduct.¹⁴ In fact the means of salvation lies principally in obedience to God's commandments and the observance of all the moral and ethical rules. These extend to a great length of articulate living which involves justice, detachment, righteousness and advancement in knowledge irrespective of the station or situation in life in which one may be.¹⁵

Swami Dayananda says that the soul possesses certain senses of its own. So after release the soul develops the ability or power to subsist of its own accord while yet being in God. "Just as the soul does its duties in the world by means of the organs and senses fixed in the body, so does it enjoy happiness of all kinds by means of the powers in the beatific state".¹⁶ Swami Satya Prakash contends that just as it is possible for the soul of man to attain to a state of purity, hence not in perpetual bondage, so it is possible for a soul not to stay perpetually in a state of emancipation. It could return to the earth to take on impurity again and so work towards Salvation. The soul has an innate power to do anything it pleases. Its power however can be divided into a great variety of aspects such as strength, energy, motion, etc.

The important feature of salvation unlike the interpretation given to it by Vedantins, is not dissolution. If dissolution was the effect of true emancipation, the question arises: "How can such emancipation be appreciated? How does the happiness of such salvation come about? Who is the experiencer of such salvation?" The true effect of salvation for Dayananda lies in release from pain and the happy dwelling in the blissful, all-pervading and Infinite God.¹⁷

According to Dayananda, this is the view of the Vedanta Sutras. The last section of the fourth chapter of the Vedanta deals

with emancipated souls. It is very clearly mentioned that the soul when emancipated lives in Brahmin and enjoys all bliss. This interpretation of the Brahma Sutras by Dayananda is quite unusual for the Brahma Sutras are generally regarded as the standard scriptural texts for Vedanta philosophy. The interpretation of this section however is not in agreement with the interpretation of Shankara who clearly illustrates in his Adhyasa Bhashya how such an interpretation could not be accepted.

Swami Dayananda's interpretation of the rules of release is sometimes described as closely following the notion of release found in Ramanuja's work. But Chandogya Upanishad says, "Verily pleasure and pain do not touch one who is bodiless".¹⁸ (VII, xii, I). This however clearly illustrates the difference of opinion held in the natures of release for qualities like pain, or joy, or bliss or love are known to man endowed with the mental power of perception of such qualities. The soul of man in a state of release is transcendent and beyond descriptive scrutiny.

Release for the soul is emancipation. Although Swami Dayananda accepts that reincarnation is a fact of life he draws a distinction between emancipation and reincarnation, which he implies that a soul has yet to gain release. But a soul that gains release can also reassume a body to continue its sojourn on earth. Yet another school of Indian thought asserts that the emancipated soul may also be born as a jivanmukta or a soul embodied without being in bondage. Yet another group of thinkers suggests that a cycle of death and life is possible wherein bondage and emancipation characterise its existence. Thus between two bondages there is emancipation. Beyond two emancipations there is bondage. Dayananda it would appear accepts this concept of release as being feasible.¹⁹

Whatever may be the understanding of the value of these interpretations it becomes clear that the idea of eternity has to be accepted. All emancipation or bondage must be seen as occurring in cycles. For cycles of release and bondage have to be accepted as having occurred for all eternity and no explanation

could possibly replace this.

On the question of release for the soul several interpretations are found in various teachers. Swami Dayananda has made his position clear in accepting that bondage is followed by emancipation and emancipation is possible only through struggle while in the embodied state. Whatever views may be expressed in the final state of release, Dayananda enables us to conclude that the experience of life is an experience apparently limited because the mind cannot experience all of the soul's series of experiences at one time. We have to conclude that ours is a continuous and everlasting life. A life or lives known only to God who best determines what each soul shall ultimately experience as part of His scheme for His creation in the fulfilment of His will.

Students in the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa have not had any serious difficulty with any of the views expressed by Swami Dayananda on matters of direct theological importance. Followers within the movement appear to display much willingness to accept these teachings as a matter of doctrine and seldom, if ever, enter into any debates or discussion on the implications for Arya Samaj and Hinduism generally of these teachings. There also appears to be sometimes a lack of enthusiasm for disseminating these ideas because of the failure of the organisation to provide a basic infra structure for the dissemination of theological truths. This failure obviously has some implications for Arya Samajists themselves and ultimately Hindus generally as no facility exists whereby matters of theological importance could be discussed at academic level.

Followers of the Arya Samaj doctrines are therefore bound to follow along the course of theological development advocated by Swami Dayananda but these will for the foreseeable future be confined to class discussions, religious services and occasional meetings convened in the presence of visitors from abroad who preach the Arya Samaj doctrine. With the growth of the Ramakrishna Centre and other organisations like the Divine Life Society, the Society for Krishna Consciousness, the Sai Baba

movement and the Saiva Siddhanta Sangam, South Africa's Hindu community is singularly unfortunate in not making available the facilities for serious discussion on matters of profound theological value.

Within the context of the Arya Samaj movement itself, however, this failure becomes evident among young people who have seldom, if ever, pursued Arya Samaj doctrine beyond the level of simple tracts or even the occasional talk or lecture by a local pandit. This becomes clear also with the availability of books. So far the Veda Niketan, responsible for publishing works of importance, has failed to provide the movement with any work of profound theological importance to the movement in this country. The works of Pandit Nardev remain influential and important, but the list of publications do not extend beyond this because no demand is received either from Hindus generally or Arya Samajists in particular.

During the course of the year 1984, it is expected that English translations of the Vedas are due to become available to members of the public. No means is available at this stage for determining precisely the nature of the impact this will have on Arya Samajists as no students are immediately available for providing the necessary academic support for Vedic teachings of the Arya Samaj mould.

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SECTION FIVEFOUNDATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT: AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

FOUNDATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT: AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

Our discussions thus far have already introduced us to the historical development of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa. We reflect now upon the multi-farious divisions that formulate the more comprehensive religious action system in operation while also focusing on the methodology employed in building its structural-functional base. We enter also into a part of our study which calls to attention one of the most urgent needs of religious expression which were recognised by the two foremost proponents of religious reform found within modern neo-Hinduism. A recently published annual report of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission gives details on the programmes of social, educational and medical services rendered by that institution in India and some countries abroad.¹

Swami Vivekananda through his institution, initiated a programme of service due to the great need he felt for religious reform in addition to social and educational upliftment. In a previous chapter² it was declared that Swami Dayananda's deep concern for Hindu society was the single most important motive for his initiation of a number of social and educational facilities in various parts of the country. The life and message of Swami Dayananda clearly infuses strength into the whole range of Arya Samaj teachings, and above all have initiated a renaissance within Hinduism with refreshing vigour. This is understandable as we realise that Modern Hinduism, faced as it is with serious conflicts with Western cultural patterns and values, has found it necessary to alter the conditions of religious growth in which the young Hindu as a free individual has to engage in a social action that still bears much relationship with the cultural milieu engendered by old traditions and customs in the face of new patterns and burgeoning social norms.

This/.....

This conflict has always led Hindu theologians to search for elements of soundness which could infuse a new vitality into Hindu life and thought. Swami Vivekananda in numerous addresses to the youth of India³ appealed for a new dynamism among Indians to discover new ways of practicing the ancient faith. This has led to a search for a new brand of Hinduism under new forms that have brought into existence a new order of socio-cultural tendencies with a penetrating examination of ancient values that in turn help to discover their relevance in a new age into which Hindus worldwide find themselves advancing.

Seen culturally, religion is part of the complex of prescriptions and proscriptions that guides the interactions of men in society. Dayananda understood these prescriptions as rooted in the speaking of Truth. Also all acts of virtue were consistent with the commandment of God constituting the import of the Vedas.⁴ A major definition of the meaning of ultimate things for him was rooted in the experience of Truth as outlined in the Vedas. We therefore are drawn into considering the scheme of values and norms and its effect in the cultural patterns that the Arya Samaj system of action introduced into Hindu society in South Africa. Clyde Kluckhohn's use of the term culture expresses this pattern quite clearly. He sees culture as all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational and non-rational, that exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men.⁵

By breaking away from the traditional patterns of conduct Dayananda demonstrated how clearly he sensed the need for reorientation of the concept of values and their interplay on culture. As goals, values are those states or objects towards which behaviour is preferentially directed. Religion as a primary source of values is affected by social content; and change, to some degree, is in turn affected by the context of further changes that follow. For Arya Samaj, religion is the primary starting point. The criteria for change and subsequent objects are valued in terms of the effect that religious training may have in the social context involving succeeding generations.

Bearing in mind that for Dayananda Vedic Truth underlay all religious and social behaviour, we view the scientific study of the values that Truth engendered as the framework for total religious commitment. The relationship between religious influence and social change serves as the summary of the ideals that conceptualise for people the more lasting influences for society in the context of such religious commitment. This is an adequate position because the broadest principles we find have been laid down to accommodate the variations that emanate from the different situations in which the principles are applied. We hold that the general condition which maximizes the ability of religion to affect the process of social changes is the existence of some degree of autonomy in the religious situation.

No clearer indication of the functional interdependence of religion with society can be found than the changes which religions undergo when their social settings change. Religion in the Arya Samaj scheme must not be seen as a single flash of inspiration or revelation, but the result of steady growth and development. Most Hindu theologians will agree that the necessity for beliefs, rites and religious group structures arises from the effect these would have on total religious influences and change. Thus the fundamental elements of religious faith will be seen to be ultimately fixed and rooted in the nature of being and more specifically Truth. Hence changes in society while necessitated by religious conception are not necessarily the initiators of religious change but are commensurate with it. We shall now see how this interdependence of social and religious change helps to effect the lasting values advocated in Dayananda's conception of religious growth and influence.

CHAPTER 1

AFFILIATED BRANCH UNITS

When in 1950 the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha celebrated its twenty-fifth ("Silver Jubilee") year of existence, no less than fourteen branch units had been declared member units of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in Durban and a further ten units were affiliated from outside the city in various parts of Natal. These centres are listed in the publication by Pandit Nardev under the general title "Vedic Institutions of Natal".⁶ At the time of the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1925 at least one of these had already been in existence for more than a decade. In fact Pietermaritzburg had been a centre of vibrant religious consciousness and many very devout and ardent Arya Samajists, directly influenced by the flood of Aryan activities in the Punjab in India, had started the work in Natal's capital city. The Ved Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg had been started in 1909.⁷ In addition to these twenty-four Arya Samaj affiliates, the Arya Yuvak Sabha of Durban and the Aryan Benevolent Home, large and formidable institutions in their own right, were accepted, bringing the total number of affiliated units to twenty-six.

Mr. Sukraj Chotai's booklet on the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha published in 1973 lists also twenty-six branch units of the Sabha which existed in Natal when the Sabha celebrated fifty years of existence.⁸ The number excludes the Aryan Benevolent Home and the Arya Yuvak Sabha which were powerful organisations and commanded a strong measure of independence.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha's fifty-seventh annual general meeting was held in June 1982. The report issued for the occasion,³ contains a list of affiliated member institutions existing at the present time.⁹ Of the forty-four listed members none exists outside Natal. Fifteen of these institutions go by the name "Arya Samaj", four as "Arya Stri Samaj", and eight have the word "Arya" as part of their name and the rest have adopted names suited to their respective situations and circumstances. These forty-four affiliated institutions are:

1. Arya Samaj	- Cato Manor
2. Arya Samaj	- Durban
3. Arya Samaj	- Dannhauser
4. Arya Samaj	- Ladysmith
5. Arya Samaj	- Plessislaer
6. Arya Samaj	- Port Shepstone
7. Arya Samaj	- Raisethorpe
8. Arya Samaj	- Mount Partridge
9. Arya Samaj	- Springfield
10. Arya Samaj	- Westville
11. Arya Samaj	- Umkomaas
12. Arya Samaj	- Silverglen
13. Arya Samaj	- Allendale
14. Arya Samaj	- Overport
15. Arya Samaj	- Merebank
16. Arya Stri Samaj	- Durban
17. Arya Stri Samaj	- Plessislaer
18. Arya Stri Samaj	- Ladysmith
19. Arya Stri Samaj	- Raisethorpe
20. Arya Mahila Mandal	- Pietermaritzburg
21. Arya Vir Dhal	- Pietermaritzburg
22. Arya Mitra Mandal	- Sydenham
23. Arya Mitra Mandal	- Reservoir Hills
24. Arya Vir Dhal	- Plessislaer
25. Arya Yuvak Sabha	- Durban
26. Veda Dharma Sabha	- Pietermaritzburg
27. Vedic Vidya Pracharak Sabha	- Raisethorpe
28. Veda Dharma Sabha	- Howick West
29. Vedic Mithra Mandal	- Stanger
30. Vedic Yuvak Sabha	- Wilgefontein
31. Yuvak Arya Samaj	- Clairwood
32. Hindi Vidya Pracharni Sabha	- Umlátuzana
33. Hindi Vidya Sabha	- Estcourt
34. Arya Mitra Mandal	- Asherville
35. Bharat Sangeet Samaj	- Durban
36. Candella Estate Hindu Sangattan	- Clare Estate
37. Nagari Pracharni Sabha	- Springfield
38. Hindu Shri Samaj	- Pietermaritzburg

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 39. Sarasvathi Mahila Mandal | - Umhatuzana |
| 40. Hindu Progressive Society | - Sea Cow Lake |
| 41. Hindu Sabha | - Shallcross |
| 42. Shree Ramayan Sabha | - Overport |
| 43. Isipingo Beach Hindi | - Paatshala - Isipingo Beach |
| 44. Satsang Group | - Isipingo Hills |

The work, hopes and ideals of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha may be classified into two areas in which such work could be measured. Firstly, in what is done by the headquarters of the organisation at Carlisle Street, and secondly, by its affiliated branch units. The work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha itself has been discussed at length in the previous chapter. In the following section we take a look at the work done by some of the affiliated units.

VED DHARMA SABHA

Interviews with the secretary and two other members of the Ved Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg revealed some interesting information about this organisation. The Sabha was started in Pietermaritzburg and apart from it being one of the largest affiliate branch units of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha it is also the oldest. It is in fact older than the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and plans are now being made to celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1984.

The founder of the organisation was Swami Shankerananda who also founded the South African Hindu Maha Sabha. Swami Shankeranandaji's visit to this country was sponsored by the Arya Samaj movement, which found many friends in Natal's capital city. On the insistance of the Swami several Hindu stalwarts rallied round to found the organisation on the 10 April 1909.⁵

The Sabha purchased its first property in York Road in 1910. This was named the Vedic Ashram. It soon became apparent that the work of this organisation had to be compartmentalised and the decision was taken to separate purely religious activities from educational and social welfare services.

The Sabha's tasks have for most of its seventy-five years been concentrated in the area of Hindi education where much of its energies were concentrated. It built schools and many children of the Hindi community were given Hindi education, which they would otherwise not have had. The dynamic leadership enjoyed by this organisation led to the purchase of several properties during its years of existence and several schools, temples and other buildings were constructed. The Sabha is proud that its hall built in Church Street was officially opened by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who subsequently became President of India after retiring from the staff of Oxford University.

The Sabha's Vedic Temple is a famous landmark which stands in Longmarket Street. It is from here that most of the religious work of the organisation has been done, and so commands the reputation for conducting numerous religious campaigns to spread the message of the Samaj. The enthusiastic members of the organisation have been out spreading the work and always met with success in almost every endeavour.

The Ved Dharma Sabha owns a number of properties in Pietermaritzburg. Apart from the two Vedic Temples, it owns a cinema and business complex in the city, flats and other property in the main street, and the Mountain Rise Crematorium. "The Sabha owns properties worth over a million rand."⁶ (This figure is now estimated at two million rands).

An interview with the three leading members of the Sabha in Pietermaritzburg revealed the Sabha's commitment to a very strenuous programme of service not only in religion but in other areas such as education and social welfare. The Sabha established Hindi schools in Natal's capital city at a time when education for Indian girls was considered taboo. Its extensive programme of Hindi education is well known and many thousands of Hindi speaking people are today grateful for the Hindi education they receive through the work of the Ved Dharma Sabha.

The enthusiasm displayed by members of the Sabha is indicated by their regular attendance at meetings, many of which were held in Durban. In the second interview, a pandit and prominent member of the Sabha expressed pride in the fact that whenever a meeting was convened in Durban, a quorum of twenty-five persons was always made up of fifteen people from Pietermaritzburg and ten people from Durban.

Perhaps the only really serious problem encountered by the Ved Dharma Sabha in Pietermaritzburg is the problem encountered by the entire Arya Samaj movement both in India and South Africa and no doubt other countries as well. The familiar words that divide the Hindu community into groups are Arya Samaj and Sanathani. The word Sanathani was coined to indicate belief in Sanathana Dharma by which Hinduism is more correctly known. The broad classification of the community into Arya Samajist and Sanathani is now very well known. The establishment of the Arya Samaj movement in this country met with very much the same reaction that greeted Swami Dayananda's original plan to reform Hindu Indian society. Conflict between the two groups intensified quite considerably over the years, until the present time when the coldness between them remains sometimes uncomfortably submerged and often surfaces when controversial issues such as worship of images in temples is discussed. Many people become aware of the fact that traditional systems of worship die a very difficult death and as much as the enthusiasm among Arya Samajists for reformed systems of worship flourishes, Sanathanis resent the radical changes called for.

The second interviewer spoke of a vendetta against Arya Samajists which often during its history provoked much jealousy within the community and which often escalated to uncontrollable animosities. Among the familiar slogans propagated within Sanathani ranks is the idea that, "if one listened to Kathas all sins would be forgiven".¹²

My interview with a third prominent member of the Ved Dharma Sabha proved very convincing that the organisation had established itself in a way that cemented itself in the city for

a very long and solid future. He revealed that the estimated value of property owned by the Samaj is R2 million. Thus the monthly income is very substantial and helps the organisation to maintain a very high standard of service to the community.

The Hindi schools maintained by the organisation are unique in that the good standards attained both in education and administration are a source of some pride to the community. As far as Hindi schools are concerned salaries are paid to a better qualified staff whose services are subjected to numerous methods of supervision and control not normally found in other vernacular schools in the country. The examinations written by the students are based on those set in India and the pass rate for the schools supervised and controlled by the Ved Dharma Sabha are estimated at above seventy-five percent. The contribution made to the cultural, religious and educational development of the community is in the circumstances unique. The amount of money that is available to the community has been a most important contributing factor to the success of the educational efforts undertaken by the Ved Dharma Sabha. Its Board of Management which controls the schools is proud of the work being done and although it is sometimes accused of being negligent, it still holds a record for achieving a yeoman standard of service.

The schools have been successful in inculcating many religious values and so the preservation of religious and cultural ideals, is strong. The children are taught to perform Havan and many of the books written by Pandit Nardev and published by the Veda Niketan are prescribed for study in the Hindi schools.

The pupils of the school have always been encouraged to take part in various school concerts, and above all, eistedfods run by an independent cultural organisation that has been responsible for cultural work among the Hindi speaking people of every religious persuasion. The awards day, at which children are awarded prizes for outstanding achievements in various branches of cultural work, is always a glittering affair and well attended and supported by the community.

The success of the school system started by the Ved Dharma Sabha has encouraged many of its members to think of establishing a Gurukul where future Pandits and Priests of Arya Samaj persuasion may be trained. The religious programme thus continues to flourish and there is every evidence that the Arya Samaj is a growing movement and that more members of the Hindu, and more particularly Hindi-speaking community would be drawn into its fold in future years.

The 58th Annual Report of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha summarises the achievements of Ved Dharma Sabha under the following headings:

COUNCIL MEETINGS: The Council of this Sabha held its meetings very regularly to discuss business matters affecting the Sabha.

SATSANGS: Prayer services are being conducted very regularly by each of the priests of the Sabha at its temples. Prayer Services are also conducted in hospitals, prisons and private homes.

CREMATORIUM: The officials in charge of the crematorium were happy to conduct their affairs as caretakers of this service.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOLS: This Sabha conducts five Hindi schools in the Pietermaritzburg area and has the task of concerning itself with every aspect of the education system which includes the provision of a syllabus, teaching techniques and methods and the conducting of examinations set by the Sarvadeshik Sabha in Wardha, India. Pupils were successful in the writing of both Prathamik and Parambhik examinations conducted by the Veda Niketan.

EISTEDDFOD: Pupils of the schools took part in the eisteddfods conducted by the Hindi Shiksha Sangh and were successful in several areas of performance.

The Ved Dharma Sabha wants obviously to pursue its ideals as stated in its fiftieth anniversary brochure. It claims to be wedded to no individual personality but is objective in every aspect of its religious and cultural organisation. There is no doubt that a strong body of persons is committed to their ideal. Hence its programme of action for the future appears as though it is being pursued with confidence and optimism.

PLESSISLAER ARYA SAMAJ

A very familiar and often bitter complaint among many Indian communities in South Africa, is one levelled at the notorious Group Areas Act and its cruel effects upon life in the Indian community.¹³ The Plessislaer Arya Samaj is now situated in Northdale, Pietermaritzburg. It however retains the name Plessislaer Arya Samaj because of the area in which it was originally established before it was forced to move to its present site. The cultural centre is situated in the present Indian Group area and consists of a temple (Ved Mandir), classrooms and other facilities built and formally opened on the 18 July 1976. The life and personality of Swami Dayananda are prominently marked by means of a large portrait of the leader and large posters bearing extracts from his writings.

At the service in the temple attended on the morning of Sunday, 27 March 1983 one had an opportunity of witnessing a very simple but beautiful service conducted by the president and members of the Samaj. The Samaj itself has a growing membership although many people in the community while not strictly speaking Arya Samajists as such are nevertheless sympathetic and even faithful to its ideals. Services are held regularly every Sunday morning.

The Samaj is also responsible for conducting a Hindi school in the classrooms adjoining the Mandir and some fifty to a hundred pupils regularly attend these classes there. However,

the emphasis in the weekly service is the observance of several important religious festivals and more especially ceremonies that mark the death of close members of the congregation and community at large. The close members who are known for their dedicated service also conduct religious services at hospitals, schools, prisons and other areas. They have been commended for their fund-raising efforts and the success of these has resulted in the extension of their services in various areas of religious and social relief work. Important visitors to Pietermaritzburg never fail to receive invitations to attend and participate in the weekly service in the Mandir. The underlying task of the Plessislaer Arya Samaj is to propagate the Arya Samaj philosophy underlined by the prominent display of quotes from Dayananda's work. For example:

"Blessed are the men and women who cultivate truthfulness: who enlighten the minds of those who are ignorant; whose chief delight consists in promoting the happiness of others by the preaching of Truth."

or "May the whole world be noble!"

And another:

"The world is fettered by the chain forged by superstition and ignorance. I have come to snap asunder the chain and to set slaves free. It is contrary to my mission to have people deprived of freedom."

SARASVATHIE MAHILA MANDAL:

The organisation has about fifty members who hold regular meetings. A Hindi school is run in addition to various cottage services which the group conducts at funerals with the singing of dhoons and bhajans. While Hindi classes have been conducted regularly several members have enrolled to write the examination and a good success rate has been achieved.

The women usually engage in various fund raising activities

and the proceeds are used for teachers' salaries, contributions to needy institutions, etc.

YUVAK ARYA SAMAJ - CLAIRWOOD:

This group has about ninety registered members.

Council meetings are held often to discuss business matters, but the more important tasks of holding religious services regularly are met with care. Sunday evening services are conducted regularly. The children have participated in numerous concerts and eisteddfods conducted by the Hindi Shiksha Sangh.

The group has already embarked on its building projects in that plans have been drawn up, and soon the task of building will commence when these plans have been approved.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ - PLESSISLAER:

The group has fifty members who attend the various meetings and functions organised by the Samaj. They use the Veda Mandir of the Arya Samaj. Although the group functions in Morthdale it retains the name given to it when it was founded. It was forced under the notorious Group Areas Act to move to its present location where most members of the Indian community now live.

All religious functions are usually conducted together with the Arya Samaj where members are drawn from the same families that contribute their women to the Arya Stri Samaj.

PLESSISLAER ARYA SAMAJ:

This group has a large membership. It however conducts prayer services very regularly at its new well-known Vedic Temple built recently.

The Hindi schools are conducted regularly. Members of the Samaj have assisted many families especially during bereavement and illness and numerous other functions were organised. This group

has at/.....

has at the helm of its affairs several firmly dedicated Arya Samajists who commit themselves to a strenuous programme of work. They thus spare no effort in raising funds to meet every demand in a wide sphere of religious and also social services.

SHREE RAMAYAN SABHA - OVERPORT:

This group conducts religious services regularly every Sunday morning at its newly completed hall in Overport. It also conducts Hindi classes and encourages participation in Hindi examinations, concerts and of course the Hindi eisteddfod conducted by the Hindi Shiksha Sangh.

Fund raising efforts are held and these have contributed in many ways to the success of the work undertaken by this Sabha.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ - OVERPORT:

This women's group has been successful in conducting numerous religious services in addition to celebrating festivals like Raam Naumi, Krishna Asthamee, Deepavali, etc.

Whenever the women are called upon to render any form of religious service they show willingness to be of service. This is done through the singing of bhajans and dhoons and performance of havan in private homes and elsewhere.

A Hindi school is conducted by the leader of the group, one of the well-known woman priests of the Arya Samaj movement.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ - DURBAN:

As the name states this is a women's organisation. The members avail themselves of every opportunity to perform any task for which they are called upon particularly on religious occasions. These include the singing of bhajans, recital of verses from the Ramayana and Bhagavad Gita, rendering of Dhoons, performance of Havan, etc. They help to celebrate various festivals like Raksha Bandhan.

Fund raising becomes an important event for them and this is usually done through cake and jumble sales. Whenever the need arises they treat members of the old age home to special dinners in addition to performing special religious services which nearly always includes the performance of havan.

The group encourages the study of Hindi and several members have enrolled to sit for Hindi examinations conducted by the Veda Niketan. As expected some of the members have even been preparing for the Vedic Purohit examinations which will culminate in their being inducted as priests of the Arya Samaj.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ - RAISETHORPE - PIETERMARITZBURG:

This organisation has about thirty-five registered members and regularly conducts prayer services sometimes in collaboration with other groups like the Arya Samaj in Raisethorpe.

The women are usually engaged in numerous activities such as those conducted by their counterparts in Durban and engage in numerous religious activities such as the performance of Havan - usually called a yajna or Maha yajna.

The members of this group have enrolled for Hindi examinations which they completed with considerable success. Sanskrit classes were also conducted by Swami Deekshanand during his stay in this country in 1979.

Numerous fund raising projects occupy much of the time and energy of the women in addition to sponsoring talks, discussions and other activities.

UMHLATUZANA HINDI VIDYA PRACHARNEE SABHA:

This Sabha conducts a Hindi school, a class in religious instruction and regular satangs (services) are held twice a week in Umhlatuzana.

ARYA SAMAJ - CATO MANOR:

A pandit in this area is responsible for conducting a Hindi

patshala in addition to the satsangs he conducts regularly every Friday evening. The Samaj is now in the process of constructing a temple on a half acre site recently acquired at considerable cost.

ISIPINGO HILLS SATSANG GROUP:

This group is known for its regular services held at Isipingo Hills. Members hold Pariwarik Satsang where chanting of the Gayatri mantra is strictly observed.

ARYA VEER DAL: PLESSISLAER:

This little group is responsible for teaching Vedic ideals in the Northdale area of Pietermaritzburg. A youth camp is held periodically and much is done to promote Arya Samaj ideals.

RAISETHORPE ARYA SAMAJ:

This group is responsible for conducting a service once a week in the Veda Mandir. Religious services are also held whenever the need arises to observe a festival or special ceremony occasioned by an important event.

PIETERMARITZBURG HINDI STREE SAMAJ:

This group is responsible for celebrating important festivals. Regular prayer services and satsangs are held sometimes in collaboration with other groups. Members of the Arya Stri Samaj show a keen interest in the performance of havan. In addition to these, bhajans and songs are sung at regular gatherings.

CHAPTER 2

ARYAN LEAGUE

The Aryan League is better known to members of the Hindi community, and more especially those associated with the Arya Samaj as the Aryan Youth League. Its specific purpose is to serve as a vehicle for cultural expression among Hindu youth. The tendency among people to speak of the aspirations of the youth and to view them with some form of concern for their cultural and religious well being is well known in the community. With the history of the Arya Samaj movement having progressed along a course of development in which people saw every aspect of social, cultural and religious life being attended by the Samaj, it was inevitable that specific intentions for the young people in the community would surface before long. Each of the segments of work as outlined and discussed in this thesis so far pinpoints the concern of the Arya Samajists for every segment of society. Concern for Hindu youth was expressed through the formation of the Aryan Youth League.

A pamphlet describing the history of the League speaks of "involvement of the younger generation in nation building and community work".¹ Several of the more dedicated people within the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha therefore took up the task of enthusing young people with interest in cultural matters and set about the task of formulating the guide lines by which these could be achieved.

A youth camp was held in 1976 in Durban when a visitor from India, Swami Krishnananda, agreed to participate in it. Another visitor two years later, inspired the holding of another camp for youth in 1978. It was regarded as a camp more specifically designed for teaching and propagating Arya Samaj ideas as the visitor from India was a protagonist of Arya Samaj teachings. It was at this camp that the youth league came into existence and became known as the Aryan Youth League. One of the earlier tasks of this league was the distribution of pamphlets through which the teachings of Hinduism were propagated among the people of Durban.

Another youth camp was held in 1980 and again attended by a foreign visitor who was asked to lead the youth in discussions and other activities. This time, however, the people met in Pietermaritzburg and very much the same kind of activity motivated the young people to discovering a new Hindu consciousness among them. The same pamphlet describes the objective of the youth league as the adoption of a "policy to cut through the miasma of superstition and fanaticism that has disgraced the name of religion ...".² The pamphlet further describes its objectives as a "move towards the ideal of human unity by accepting the divinity of the human individual regardless of caste or colour, race or creed, religion or nationality".

It becomes clear during the course of the examination of the ideals of this organisation that some attempt has been made for young people to imbibe higher ideals with a philosophical basis. Hence the concern of the youth league with "spiritual humanism" although this has never been clearly defined. Their concern with this ideal, however, is dependent upon their understanding of the principle of spiritual humanism as a workable religio-philosophical ideal. The goal the young people have set themselves, however, revolves around more universal principles which transcend such limits as "good citizens of South Africa" and substitutes instead a growth towards becoming "true citizens of the world at large". How precisely this is to be achieved is not really explained by the youth, but interviews with people associated with the League reveal that some attention is being given to the problem of greater awareness among youth of these objectives.

During the course of the investigations on the influence of the Arya Samaj on young people in the Durban area, where the headquarters of the movement is situated, it was discovered that many young people were not well acquainted with the movement or its teachings.

A simple survey by means of a brief questionnaire, directed at a small group of young people mainly at the University of

Durban-Westville, but also at a few schools and colleges in the Durban area, helped to assess the standing of Arya Samaj work among them.

It was discovered that young people could be very sharply divided into two groups: those that came under the influence of Arya Samaj propagation and those who received no influence whatsoever. The second group of people displayed no interest in the work of the organisation because they had not heard much or, in many instances, had heard nothing at all about it. Thus response to the questionnaire was largely negative and unenthusiastic. On the other hand, the survey among people who had heard of the Arya Samaj revealed more positive responses and in a small number of cases very enthusiastic response.

It was discovered that the youth who had heard about the Arya Samaj came largely from areas like Chatsworth (mainly Units 6 and 7), Pietermaritzburg and Stanger. It was established that strong Arya Samaj centres function in these areas so their influence over members of their respective youth groups is strong. In these areas much about Swami Dayananda and his work is taught by erstwhile members of the movement.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has been able to continue organising its youth camps where large groups of young people, many from the Aryan Benevolent Home, were present. This has been a fairly important means of imparting Arya Samaj ideas to the youth and the numerous programmes of youth activity in these camps help to entrench these ideas. So, whenever young people attend youth camps, their subjection to Arya Samaj teachings is extensive.

The movement has not been able to extend youth work very widely with the result that the Arya Samaj's appeal among younger people remain somewhat inadequate. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha's forty-four affiliated branch units have not been successful in extending their religious services among youth through any specific youth programme. Although

it was/.....

it was found that many young people attend religious services conducted by the various affiliated units, these have been general services where people are asked to sing songs and perhaps participate in havan ceremonies.

Perhaps the only really serious matter concerning knowledge of other organisations is the idea that Arya Samaj does not allow the use of idols in its places of worship. Most of the people questioned were aware that worship of Sri Ramakrishna is a focal point of a religious service in any Ramakrishna Centre.

The young people, however, were found to be strongly influenced into believing that some form of religious conscription was necessary among young people and that for this reason it was necessary that religious ideas should be spread, more specifically to members of their peer group. Most of the young people agreed that if Hindu ideas were spread it was sufficient that these ideas were centred around the growth and development of Hinduism in general and there was no need for any serious distinction between Arya Samaj and other Hindu religious teachings. Most of the people were pleased that Swami Dayananda advocated a break from too much ritualism, and many were also elated at the suggestions of manliness that Dayananda's life style portrayed. Many people believed that it was necessary that young people should have some religious knowledge as most appeared embarrassed when facing members of other religious groups. Non-Hindus displayed a greater sense of religious awareness and were, therefore, strongly motivated towards cultural consciousness.

It was not possible to establish just how many young people have thus far come to know of the Arya Samaj or now being influenced by it in any way. It is, however, possible to conclude that in specific areas in southern Natal, more especially parts of Durban where members of the Arya Samaj live, some discrimination of religious teachings has been effective. An important feature of religious affiliation among Hindu youth is that no strong views are held by them about the use of images which means that no strong parental influence is seen to operate. Thus the

earlier feuds between Samajists and Sanathanis is very largely absent among young people who display a general enthusiasm for general religious affiliation.

Young people still display some interest in cultural progress if this progress can contribute to their welfare in all walks of life. Many of the young people questioned were asked about any strong political ramifications of their beliefs and were happy that in time cultural contact may enhance human relations on a wider level in South Africa.

QUESTIONNAIRE

ARYA SAMAJ AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Do you fall into the age group 15-20 years? YES/NO

2. Are you aware of the existence of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa? YES/NO

3. Do you know anything at all about its work and teachings? YES/NO

4. Do you attend any religious services conducted by the Arya Samaj? YES/NO

5. Do you read any books on the Arya Samaj - it's work and teachings? YES/NO

6. Do Arya Samaj teachings appeal to you? YES/NO

7. If yes, say what specifically appeals to you.

8. Are you aware of any differences of either work or teachings between the Arya Samaj and an organisation like the Ramakrishna Centre? YES/NO

9. If so, state briefly what this difference is.

10. Do you believe Arya Samaj teachings should be spread among young people in South Africa? YES/NO

11. If so; why?

CHAPTER 3

VEDA NIKETAN

The Veda Niketan (known in Hindi as the Prachar Samiti) is the branch of the Sabha which concentrates on publishing its books and other suitable literature for use by its members and the public at large, and also conducts examinations for all students showing an interest in Hinduism. Again this branch of the work has received the personal supervision and direction of Pandit Nardev Vedalkar. Since his arrival in this country he has personally conducted its affairs and to date the Veda Niketan has been able to publish a vast number of books and pamphlets covering a wide field of work and teachings. Several of the works consulted for the writing of this thesis were published by the Veda Niketan.

The Veda Niketan can be considered the education wing of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. It has organised a number of examinations that could be written by interested students. These are the

Dharma Prathama (Elementary)
 Dharma Pravesha (Junior)
 Dharma Prakash (Intermediate)
 Dharma Pravina (Senior)
 Dharma Prabhakar (Diploma)

Students participating in these examinations are expected to read a number of prescribed books in preparation for this. The examinations are conducted annually and are written by students in many parts of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Mauritius and other countries. In order to encourage participation in examinations the Veda Niketan uses a variety of methods to enthuse students.

The Veda Niketan has been responsible for publishing many books, the most famous of which is the Aryan Prayer, for which there has been a great demand in this country. Hindus of all religious denominations make use of it in their various services.

Demand for this book has even been made overseas. This book has become the standard textbook for the performance of the Havan ceremony, described in detail in the section on the Vedic Temple.

Perhaps the best known work produced by the Veda Niketan is "Shastra Navanitam" - a book by Pandit Nardev on the Hindu Scriptures. The Book goes by the better known title: "A Concise Study of Hindu Scriptures". Pandit Nardev was assisted in his compilation by two students in India. This work written in English contains extracts from all the various scriptures of Hinduism and attempts to introduce the general reader to these scriptures in elementary form. The book consisting of 512 pages has been divided into three sections:

- i) Revealed Knowledge - dealing with the Vedas and containing extracts from them.
- ii) Wisdom of the Rishis - containing extracts from the Upanishads Bhagvad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Manusmitri, Puranas, Shad Darshanas, and some of Acharya Shankara's work.
- iii) Voice of Realised Saints - this part contains sayings of Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, and Punjabi Saints.

The Veda Niketan has succeeded now in establishing approximately ten examination centres where examinations are conducted. These are at Lenasia near Johannesburg, Laudium near Pretoria and Springs, (Three centres in the Transvaal) and seven centres in Natal at Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Verulem and Tongaat. Most of the candidates writing these examinations are students of schools run by the Ved Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg. It was reported at the 1983 Annual General Meeting of the Arya Pratinishi Sanbh that a total of 223 students from nine centres in South Africa sat the examinations and 223 passed. The high success rate of candidates reflects the quality of dedication to this educational interest on the part of both teachers and students and also the community at large.

The Veda Niketan has succeeded in building up the variety of services to the community so far as its educational programme is concerned. With the writings of examinations, the publishing of books, the organisation of study groups and yoga classes the Veda Niketan is proving itself to be one of the most erstwhile Hindu organisations in the country. Its influence upon communities in other countries speaks highly of the commitment and expertise of the officials in this organisation. The annual report lists a total of eighteen countries on four continents where this influence is felt.

CHAPTER 4

VEDIC TEMPLE

The central or mother Temple of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is known as the Vedic Temple. It is situated in Carlisle Street in the heart of the city of Durban. Ever since the consecration of the Temple, where all its major services are held, the Vedic Temple has been the central focus of attention within the Arya Samaj. Veda Kathas have been held in it for many years conducted by the Chief Priest who is the Reciter and Kathakar (Exponent). He is usually assisted and sometimes substituted by the Assistant Priest. Other ceremonies conducted are weddings and some major festivals.

The souvenir brochure published by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha to mark the Sabha's Golden Jubilee 1925 - 1975 contains several messages sent to the Sabha by prominent personalities like the Mayor of Durban and others.¹ The president of the Sabha in 1975 in his message says that the crowning glory of the Sabha was celebrated on the 5th October 1975 when it observed the fiftieth anniversary of the Sabha and also opened the doors of its Vedic Temple for worship. This came as "the culmination of its many years of determined efforts, labour and sacrifice to build a place of worship according to Vedic principles".² The Temple was built at a cost of R80 000 provided by a vast number of people within the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa. Two prominent Acharyas were specially invited from India to participate in the celebrations, to perform the Yajur Veda Parayana Yajna, consecrate the Vedic Temple and deliver the Jubilee addresses. They came as special representatives of the Arya Samaj headquarters in India and inspired many people in South Africa, with their Arya Samaj message.

The main function of the Vedic Temple is to serve the spiritual needs of the Hindu community, as conceived by the Arya Samaj. In order to carry these out the Sabha engages in work in the following areas:

(i) PREACHING.....

i. PREACHING IN JAILS AND HOSPITALS

Several of the priests of the Sabha are engaged in preaching and other spiritual duties which they dedicate to the service of prisoners in prisons throughout Natal. These services have an impact upon Hindu prisoners and some are known to be so affected by these services that their association with the Sabha is usually prolonged after their release.³

Similar services are conducted in hospitals, at military bases, more especially the Naval Academy and other places where official duties at government level are desired.

ii. SPECIAL SERVICES

Special services are held in the Temple on special occasions. One such being the ceremony marking assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The Temple, however, is used on other occasions for religious services of every kind. It has been a service of considerable spiritual comfort to people in Durban.

iii. RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Religious services are generally held on a wide variety of occasions. Apart from the regular weekly services, services are held as part of the normal programme of religious duty undertaken by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. It is a matter of note that the HAVAN ceremony usually forms the focal point of worship at most if not all Arya Samaj services.⁴ The ritual ceremonies performed by all Hindus date back many thousands of years and are generally divided into two classes: Vedic and Agamic.⁵ Vedic rituals are of the nature of sacrifices to presiding deities; Agamic rites are connected with the worship of idols.

By nature of its theology Arya Samaj religious practices are purely Vedic in content and nature. The Karma Kānda portion of the Vedas constitutes its ritual section. The Purva-Mimamsa school of thought regards the performance of ritual as the sole

purpose of Vedic worship. A yajna or sacrificial rite consists in offering gifts such as food and condiments to a deity in worship.

These are accompanied by the offerings of ghee (melted butter), grains, soma juice, etc. The deities that are propitiated were usually Indra, Mitra and Varuna in addition to several others in the Hindu pantheon. All offerings are made into the sacrificial flame contained in a receptacle, which serves as the central container assuming great importance in the worship.

The sacrificial fire as a mode of worship has its roots in a primitive idea which Mahadevan regards as one of the principles underlying the beginnings of religion. He regards the sacrificial religion as utilitarian and based on the principle of reciprocity between men and gods. He continues, "This is the principle underlying Vedic ritualism, which marks the beginning of religion".⁶ The importance given to the Havan ceremony, however, is quite unique to Arya Samajists and is therefore a feature of all worship irrespective of the particular ceremony being conducted. All of the sixteen Sanskars performed during the life of a person are now marked by Havan rituals, because they are regarded as purificatory rites performed to enhance a person's spiritual qualities. The distinct difference, however, between an Arya Samaj Havan ritual and all other Havan rituals is that while the latter are usually directed at specific deities of the Hindu pantheon, Arya Samaj rituals are directed at the Omnipotent and Omnipresent God or formless being.⁷

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, through its affiliated institution, the Veda Niketan, has published a standard Book of Prayer called Aryan Prayer, for use by all members and affiliate institutions of the Sabha. This work contains also the prayers, hymns and other information concerning the total religious and ceremonial worship and liturgy of the Sabha. The Vedic Temple has as its main shrine area a pit where

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the sacrificial fire is lit during worship. The fire is lit to several chants and wood is fed into it to keep the fire ablaze. The oblations like ghee and other condiments are offered while the chants are sung by the officiating priest and members of the Congregation. The emphasis placed upon Havan is almost unequalled by any other Hindu sect because of the importance it places on the worship of the formless God in place of worship of any one or other deity.

CHAPTER 5

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME

The founder president of the Arya Yuvak Sabha is remembered by all persons interested in the Arya Samaj as one of the stalwarts of the movement in this country. Not only was he responsible for the birth of the Arya Yuvak Sabha, he was also one of the founders of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. It is, however, one very brief but poignant scene that fate played out in his life that was responsible for the coming into existence of one of South Africa's greatest achievements in the field of social welfare for any population group in the entire country. The Aryan Benevolent Home ranks as one of this community's proud achievements, more particularly in that area of social work which considers care of the aged and care of orphans as important.

An African constable was seen one night in April 1918 violently abusing an old and frail Indian beggar who, "out of necessity had rested his weary limbs by the roadside".¹ The homeless beggar sought shelter in a nearby public toilet. This incident invoked the sympathy of the man who remembered the lessons of the Arya Samaj movement which appealed to men to understand that, "The prime object of the Arya Samaj - Vedic Church, is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being".² "All men should subordinate themselves to the laws of Society calculated to promote the well being of all."³

The incident was related to members of the Arya Yuvak Sabha at its meeting held on the 7th July 1918. A resolution calling for the establishment of the Aryan Benevolent Home was then adopted. The first home established to accommodate people in need of care was known as ANATH ASHRAM. Then followed the purchase of the property at Bellair Road in Mayville in December 1918. Public donations were called for and through wise leadership the place of refuge and safety grew in size and strength. By 1924 the Ashram was well known not only to

the general public but also government and civic bodies. The Protector of Indian Immigrants was known to send Indians in need of assistance to the home. Later even the police were able to send people like loiterers and potential criminals to the place of care. In 1926 there were 26 inmates and the Home realised the need for opening its doors to orphans and other children in need of care.⁴ The building grew in size over many years. The original wood and iron building was replaced by a solid brick building that was expanded in the years 1928, 1935 and 1943. The property at Cato Manor was expanded to accommodate the new demands of a dining and multi-purpose hall.⁵

On the 1 May 1965 the aged were transferred to Clayton Gardens through negotiations with the City Council. The activities of the Home had to be more clearly defined as both aged or senior citizens and young children were being cared for. On June 22 1965 the Aryan Benevolent Home Council decided to form two separate units. These were the Aryan Benevolent Home, Children's Home Board of Management and the Aryan Benevolent Home, Clayton Garden Home for the Aged Board of Management.⁶

The Children's Home now situated in Chatsworth, the sprawling Indian Township south of Durban, was completed in June 1979 and the children moved into their new cottage a month later. The senior citizens were able to move to their new home in 1982 which was declared the Year of the Aged by the United Nations. The Aryan Benevolent Home continues to function as such, except that the home for the Aged in Chatsworth is now known as the Dayanand Garden Home for the Aged. The history of the Home for the Aged has a certain poignancy about it. The souvenir brochure makes adequate note of this, "Three people have played a marvellous role in the beginning, growth and development of the splendid institution and their lives will always remain a source of inspiration to generations of men and women endowed with the spirit of service to the less fortunate. Through head, heart, hands and health the three men awakened the conscience of the community and crusaded for a better life for the old and the infirm. In the Diamond

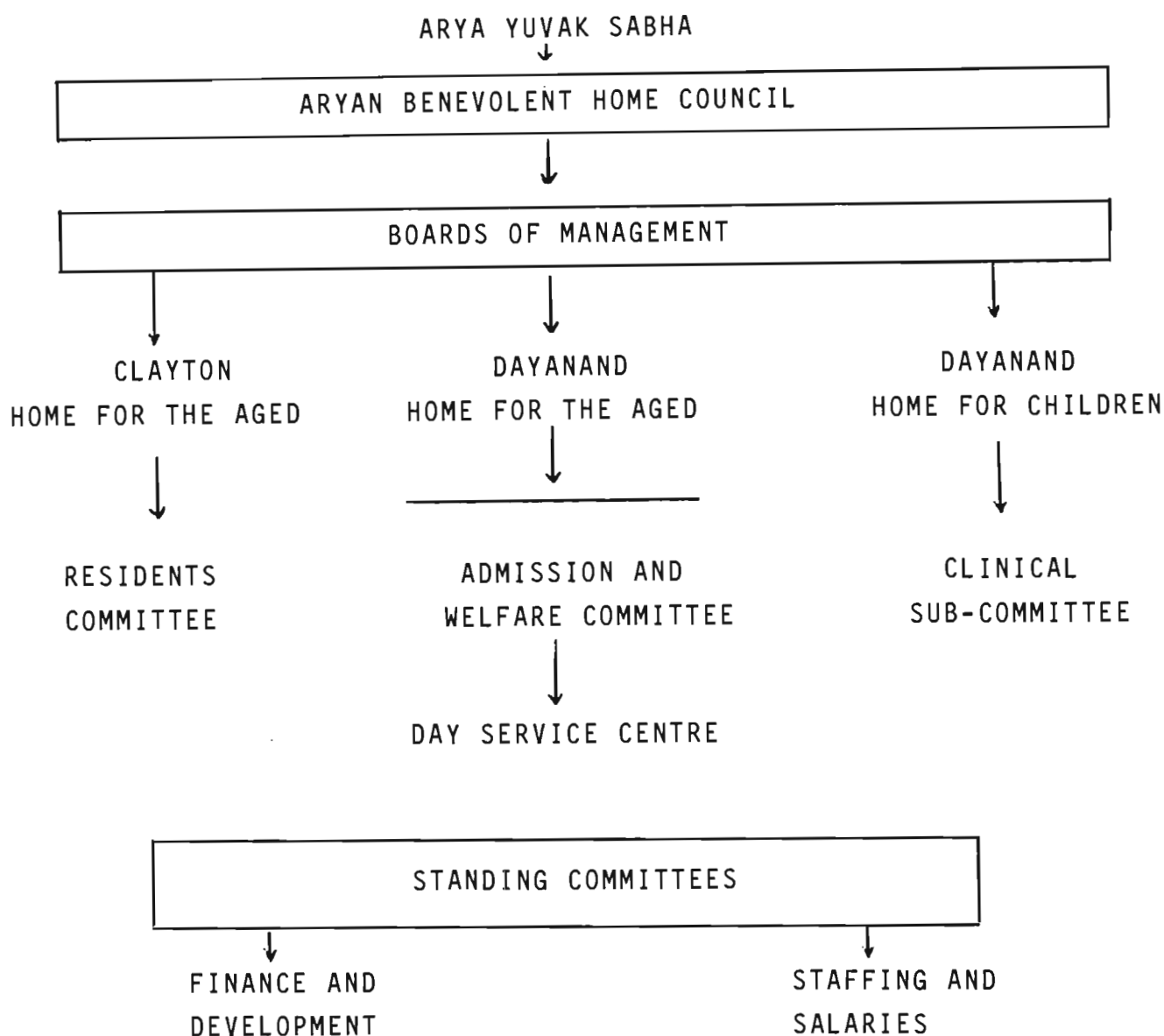
Jubilee year (1982) of the Aryan Benevolent Home, it is pertinent to spare a thought for all those who identified themselves with the cause of suffering humanity. Mr. Satyadeva, who saw the sorrows and the sufferings, typified by a poor Indian beggar seeking shelter in a toilet one day in 1918, inspired the great movement. He identified himself with the beggars and to demonstrate by his own example that no work, honestly undertaken, demeans or dirties a human being. He appealed for funds and other assistance to relieve the pain and distress that others suffered. The altruistic processes that Mr. Satyadev had initiated found fulfilment in the lives of Mr. Nayanah Rajh and Mr. S.L. Singh. The three men worked in earnest to induce a more charitable, humane and rational attitude of service to the unfortunate people who had suffered so much deprivation in their lives. Many people were inspired by the dedication of the three men and joined in to make their own contributions to the growth of the movement. Like the founders, they showed a sense of responsibility and became a link in the successful operation of the Home in the different stages of its growth in the last sixty years.⁷

At the time of the transfer of residents from the old Clayton Gardens Home to the new Dayanand Gardens Home for the Aged in Chatsworth, some one hundred and sixty residents were moved to the impressive new building. In the entire history of the Home, that now spans sixty years, some four thousand frail, sick and lonely aged residents had received comfort at this Home. The new home to which the persons in most need of care were taken serves the aged with great dedication. Some residents still live at the old premises at Clayton Gardens, while others again are also found at the original home in Cato Manor.

In a pamphlet describing the reflections of the Chairman on the Growth and Development of the Aryan Benevolent Home, is given a fairly concise description of the hopes and achievements of the institution since its establishment. We proceed with an examination of the growth and achievements of the Aryan Benevolent Home before discussing culminating celebrations

to mark the Home's Golden Jubilee in December 1982.

The organisation that brought the Aryan Benevolent Home into existence is the Arya Yuvak Sabha. It still functions as the Arya Yuvak Sabha (discussed in the following chapter). A diagrammatic representation of the Sabha and its subsidiaries is presented in the following way:



The two homes are served by two separate Boards of Management: a Children's Home Board and Management and the Home for the Aged Board of Management. The transfer of residents to Dayanand Gardens in Chatsworth just before the Home was opened by the Mayor of Durban on the 6 November 1982 was carried out with much willingness by members of Civil Defence with the aid of

busses/.....

busses supplied by the Durban City Council. The programme for the day consisted of speeches, songs, goodwill messages from government officials, unveiling of plaques and foundation stones for the various wards. The transfer of one hundred and sixty residents, some of them on stretchers and wheel chairs was done with considerable efficiency. The stay of residents at the new home does, however, offer many challenges that arise in the care of the aged and also care of orphans. The following pages hope to reflect on the care and comfort offered by the Home to its residents and to relate them to the underlying theme of the Arya Samaj concept of service to mankind.

The brochure issued on the occasion of the opening of the Dayanand Garden Home for the Aged says:⁸ "In addition to its basic undertaking to take care of the aged who have been admitted to the Home as full-time residents, the Aryan Benevolent Home has extended its services to the aged in the community who are cared for by their own children or other relatives and friends in their respective homes. Much of this service requires careful consideration. For this reason the 'Home' has embarked on creating a suitable environment for those who find little or no opportunity where they could air their feelings and at the same time be accepted for endeavouring to contribute in some measure to making others happy.

The Service Centre at Dayanand Garden hopes to provide more and varied opportunities for all its members to participate in activities that interest them most. By so doing, boredom, which is one of the main afflictions of old age, may be considerably reduced if not eliminated.

A wide programme of activities for the aged is therefore planned and services rendered by the University of Durban-Westville are to be extended to the Home itself.

The brochure continues: "No life is fully lived if the spiritual needs are not adequately met. To find this spiritual

satisfaction/.....

satisfaction a meditation room, again conveniently adjoining the service centre hall, is available. Members are implored to make use of this room during the day by arranging prayer meetings; time is set aside for meditation and for religious "talks and discussions".⁹

All the residents of the home are usually engaged in all kinds of activities through services provided by staff members at the Home. These activities include: knitting, making of bathroom mats, artificial flowers, serviette holders, wall-plates, candle-sticks, furniture and decorative ornaments. The article concludes: "It is hoped that more items will be made available by the public to make the Service Centre at Dayanand Garden fully operative."¹⁰

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Side by side with nursing and medical care the services of trained social workers, occupational therapists and physio-psychiatric personnel are available to meet the needs of 236 geriatrics and other aged persons in the community. This poses a great challenge to the Home now increased by the limited resources at provincial, State and even University hospitals. Any voluntary assistance by private practitioners is always eagerly awaited.

The Home has the services at present of three trained and qualified social workers. Social work services include:

<div><div>i. Admission</div><div>ii. Counselling</div><div>iii. Administration of Grants</div><div>iv. Problem solving</div><div>v. Contact with relatives</div><div>vi. Liaison</div></div>		
<div><div>Casework</div><div>↓</div><div>intake & screening</div><div>referral services</div><div>Liaison</div></div>	<div><div>Group Work:</div><div>Activities</div><div>Self-awareness</div><div>groups</div></div>	<div><div>Community Work</div><div>Education</div><div>Hobbies</div><div>Meals</div><div>Music</div><div>Group discussions</div><div>Remunerative work</div></div>

NURSING AND MEDICAL CARE

All residents connected with the Aryan Benevolent Home are divided into three categories:

- A - Category residents are social pensioners
- B - Category patients are referred to as "Frail Aged"
- C - Category patients as "Very Frail Aged."

At the Home there are one hundred and sixteen hospital beds. This section is divided into five wards, four of which contain twenty-four beds each, while the fifth has twenty beds and serves as an intensive care unit. Each ward is divided into three bays with eight beds each. Every ward is managed by nursing personnel: trained sisters and staff nurses. Modern facilities such as communication safety measures are provided in the bathrooms and toilets. A medical dispensary adds much to the comfort of all residents. This modern design of the wards and bays makes nursing care easier with the emphasis on individual attention to patients.

Regular visits by a doctor are made to the Home. Several doctors have offered voluntary service so services are given on a time shared basis. Patients are also sent to local hospitals like the R.K. Khan, Wentworth, King Edward and King George V. The Aryan Benevolent Home like other institutions is studying the problem of ageing and makes a critical evaluation of problems encountered at the Home. Studies in Gerontology and Geriatric medical care have now contributed considerably to solutions to the problems, and this has also assisted in the care and attention given to geriatrics in the Home. Representatives from the Home now contribute considerably to discussions at seminars and conferences which are arranged by many institutions in all parts of the country. Some of the problems being encountered in this field of study are accumulated pathological diseases like cataracts; arthritis, cerebral vascular accidents, congestive cardiac failure, diabetes and hemoplegia. Other medical attention in the form of physiotherapy and related attention is given at the Home and these services are in the process of being expanded.

Daily nursing care includes: brushing of teeth, bathing and washing, shaving and care of hair, trimming and care of fingers and toe nails; feeding; care of skin, reading, games, going for walks, change of bed linen, temperature checks, blood pressure counts, urine tests and dispensing medicines.

The staff consists of a sister in charge, a matron, three assistants and twenty-seven ward attendants. On the last count in September 1982 there were fifty-one "B Category" residents and ninety-two "C Category" patients.

During the course of the investigations into the work of the Aryan Benevolent Home it was possible to interview the following persons: i. The Chairman of Council; ii. Vice Chairman of Council; iii. The Director; iv. Senior Administrative Assistant, and v. The Social Worker. It was possible to attend, on special permission, meetings of the

- i. Aryan Benevolent Home Council
- ii. Arya Yuvak Sabha
- iii. Board of Management for the Old Age Home
- iv. Admission and Welfare Committee of the Home for the Aged.

In this way it became possible to become fully acquainted with the inner workings of the organisation. Visits to the Home, attendance at meetings and personal interviews enabled one to become exposed to all the technical ramifications of the functioning of the Home but above all one became familiar with the day to day services provided by the Home to many members of the Indian community.

It was possible for example to understand how particular case studies were conducted by the Board of Management. A typical meeting of the Board would encounter a case study such as a widow who receives financial support from the Government through a regular pension. However close they might be relatives are known to take advantage of the situation and subject the widow to some mental torment. Her appeal for help

necessitates/.....

necessitates appealing for help from the Home where several staff members render assistance in ameliorating the difficulties of the client.

The meeting of the Board of Management invariably encounters applications from prospective residents at the Home. These applications are carefully scrutinised and only when such scrutiny has been thoroughly effected does the committee recommend a case for admission. The problems of the aged vary from minor cases of senility to harsh instances of mental cruelty arising from family discord, illness, old age. Applications for facilities of convalescence are frequently received and staff members are generally prone to applying regular rules of procedure as laid down by a social work code of conduct.

This becomes more clear during the course of an interview with the personnel mentioned. The services at the Dayanand Garden Home for the Aged are now clearly divided into social work, medical and nursing care, physiotherapy and occupational therapy and these services are granted to residents and day care patients who visit the Home at appointed times.

It is historical fact that the Aryan Benevolent Home is older even than the National Council for the Care of the Aged, the national parent organisation that lays down the rules by which all affiliate organisations are governed. The Aryan Benevolent Home has a registered service through its affiliation, firstly to the South African National Council for the Care of the Aged and secondly to the National Council for Child and Family Welfare. The experience gained by members of staff and their expertise have contributed greatly to National conferences for the aged which have been conducted at national level with the help of the Government through State and private institutions.

Financial assistance for the running of the Home becomes possible through the Department of Indian Affairs in the case of the children; and also selected persons of the old age home (generally B category persons). The Natal Provincial

Administration also grants assistance for the care of C category (very frail aged) persons. The Durban City Council contributes its share and funds are also raised through street collections and other bonafide methods. There are at the present time (March 1983) 104 aged persons being taken care of.

Attendance at a meeting of the "Admissions and Welfare Committee" of the Aryan Benevolent Home revealed the extent to which involvement in the running of the Home is required of its Board of Management. Applications for admission to the Home are received continuously and these are only recommended after thorough screening by social workers, and finally the Admission Committee of the Board.

Cases are generally only recommended if in the social worker's opinion this is necessary. Sometimes cases are referred on the advice of doctors, courts of law and other social welfare agencies.

There are at present one hundred and four members of staff caring for the aged involving a vast amount of expenditure. Costs for the running of the home run into many millions of rands and funds are drawn from a variety of sources. These include the Department of Indian Affairs, Natal Provincial Administration, Durban City Council, Durban Indian Child Welfare Society and donations from the general public through street collections and other means.

The statistics state that the number of persons at the Home now are thirty-nine as tenants, fifty hospital patients and eighty-three frail aged and almost the same number of very frail aged.

Founder's Day was celebrated at the Home in November 1982. A guest speaker from India, a staunch member of the Arya Samaj, instilled into the minds of the audience the principles of Arya Samaj. In a talk entitled "Arya Samaj and the Principles of Social Work" he emphasized that "No man could be content with his own welfare if he does not concern himself with the

welfare of others". This was the philosophy that formed the foundations for the work of the Arya Samaj in South Africa through its various organs of service.

CHILDREN'S HOME

Information on the Children's Home was derived largely from a souvenir brochure on the Aryan Benevolent Home, some annual reports and interviews conducted with some officials and social workers of the Home. The Children's Home was established at 186 Bellair Road in Mayville in 1921. The fifty-third Annual Report of the Home presented to a meeting of the Council on Saturday, 26 July 1975 says, "The Aryan Benevolent Home is unique in the sense that it is the only organisation that provides institutional care for children, aged, destitutes, chronically ill and Indian clients of various other social welfare agencies including the Department of Indian Affairs for whom there are no institutions catering for their specific needs."¹²

The fifty-eighth secretarial report of the Home presented to a general meeting of the Arya Yuvak Sabha on Sunday, 29 June 1980, however, contains information of some significance.¹³ The report says: "The year 1979 has been most auspicious for it heralded the Year of the Child ...Hence the date 13 July 1979 will always remain an historic date." This was the day the keys to the new home in Chatsworth were handed over to the authorities of the Home by the builders and architects.

Information on the Children's Home was largely derived from interviews conducted with the social worker employed by the Board of Management for the purpose of conducting social work services among the children of the Home. The basic tasks of the social worker lie in the treatment of psycho-social problems. This is done largely through the method of counselling and other scientific methods.

As stated previously the Home is affiliated to the National

Council/.....

Council for Child and Family Welfare. There are at present (July 1983) ninety children resident at the Home and being cared for by house parents and a trained staff of medical and social workers.

The children are admitted to the Home only on the recommendation of the Department of Internal Affairs which is the chief supporting agent for finance. The children are generally well taken care of and all their needs are met. Children are generally drawn only from the Hindu and Christian communities. Muslim children are sent to Muslim institutions. The Home caters to all their needs provided they are certified as normal. Where boys are considered "difficult" they are committed to other institutions such as the School of Industries, or Boys Town.

All children at the Home are expected to stay there until the age of eighteen when they complete High school. Several instances have been recorded of applications for extension of periods of retention being granted but this is generally not encouraged. The Board of Management does, however, perform its tasks with every care, as the Home, as far as is humanly possible, is meant to be a private home and not an institution. For this reason, house parents are provided, normal family life is conducted and schooling is provided. When the children come of age marriages are arranged and performed according to the religious needs of the children. A fairly strict religious life is encouraged and needless to say Arya Samaj principles are taught. The Arya Yuvak Sabha has a strong influence on the Home. Members of the Sabha visit the Home very regularly to conduct religious services, and the resident priest, whose presence is felt all the time, is known to preach Arya Samaj principles during the course of his ministration.

It is at the Home where Arya Samaj principles and ideology are taught with almost uncompromising regularity although no attempt is ever made to convert children of other faiths to either Hinduism or Arya Samaj. The Board of Management was happy to accept a Muslim child into the Home recently and

gave the assurance that no attempt would be made to convert the child.

It became clear that all the children at the Home were recommended for adoption due to their varied backgrounds. Children often came from broken homes, with alcoholic parents, which sometimes results in the children being battered or abandoned. All children have to be recommended for safe keeping by a Court of Law in terms of the Children's Act. All the children so recommended are declared "in need of care". Some of the children are also the offspring of unmarried mothers.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The social worker's professional duty rests in the screening of the children for admission to the Home. Once the child is admitted, however, the task of caring for the children involves total development of the child with the help of the house parents, teachers at school and other persons who feature in the lives of the children during the normal course of growth and development. Growth and development therefore involves numerous professional services drawn from a variety of sources. A series of services are performed by full time and part-time social workers who have the task of screening the child. Assessment and preparation of the child for residence in the home is a highly intricate process. It is also necessary to prepare the house parents to receive a new child in the family and so become acquainted with his or her total requirements. Here the social workers have to perform the invaluable task of deciding which parents are suitably qualified to receive and so care for each child.

The pupils receive very regular attention from doctors, psychologists, speech therapists, nurses and almost any other professional service required or considered necessary. These include sending the children on holiday whenever possible. A holiday becomes possible whenever holiday accommodation is found for a child in another town or part of the country.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

It has been found that people who choose to become house parents don't necessarily belong to the Arya Samaj movement themselves. This is not a requirement although the Board of Management expresses the wish to have Arya Samajists playing this role. This would, however, mean that parents would have to be well acquainted with the needs of each child and so accommodate their religious needs as best they can.

It was discovered that recently a desire was expressed to celebrate Sarasvathi Pooja, the religious ceremony dedicated to the Goddess Sarasvathi, the patron Deity of the Arts and Learning. As this is outside the realm of Arya Samaj teachings the pupils were forbidden from observing this ceremony. A frequent criticism of Arya Samajists generally is their almost fanatical adherence to the principles they profess. A criticism levelled at Swami Dayanand himself and probably one of the most important factors contributing to his untimely and unnatural death.

The services rendered by the Aryan Benevolent Home to the children placed in the care of the Home are regarded as being equal to the best available in the country. This becomes very obvious when one becomes acquainted with the services of the Social Worker, who cares for the total development of the child with the aid of house parents, the vice principal, teachers at school, child care agencies like the Department of Internal Affairs and the Child Welfare Society. The many tasks involved in caring for the children centre round the breaking of psycho-social barriers. The social workers' tasks rest heavily on after care counselling, pre-discharge counselling and general counselling. The social worker has had virtually no occasion in the last three years to recommend boys for transfer to either Boys Town or the School of Industries, as would have been the case if the boys were difficult or unmanageable.

CHAPTER 6

VEDIC PUROHIT MANDAL

The Vedic Purohit Mandal is also known as the Academy of Vedic Priests. The Mandal has formulated a code of religious procedure which all priests (Purohitas) of the Sabha are expected to follow. This academy has been entrusted with the task of training men who have joined the priesthood. The Mandal works under the direction and supervision of Pandit Nardev Vedalankar who is the Chief Priest attached to the Vedic Temple. He has been responsible for ordaining many men and women as priests and due to his encouragement and guidance this aspect of religious work, so badly neglected before the founding of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha now receives due attention.

The Purohitas of the Mandal are expected to perform the vital function of celebrating Sanskars. They have the task of preaching the Vedic message, so they find themselves in the vanguard of Arya Samaj work, to disseminate the teachings of the Vedic religion. It naturally follows that men and women are carefully selected and then trained for the priesthood. At present no formal education is demanded or expected of any of the priests. This means that although some of the priests have had formal education at tertiary level, this has never been a compulsory requirement.

Training of priests involves their attendance at lectures organised at the Vedic Temple. These are conducted in Hindi and Sanskrit. All the sixteen sanskars are taught. In addition to this the Purohitas are also expected to perform Shuddhi Sanskar through which converts to other religions from Hinduism are reconverted to Hinduism. As the priests are not recognised as marriage officers the religious ceremonies performed are not legally binding. A civil ceremony is thus necessary in addition to the religious ceremony conducted by the purohitas of the Mandal.

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The aim of the Mandal is to propagate the Vedic sanskars, the Yajna, the Upanishad Katha and other similar ceremonies that would encourage people to follow a religious life. The Mandal wants very much to bring about uniformity in the performance of sanskars.

It was in 1973 that the first training of Purohitas commenced. It was very significant that the first group of purohitas included among them five women, who thus became the first women in the history of Hinduism in South Africa who were formally ordained as priests of the Hindu faith. The souvenir brochure¹ of the Sabha lists the names of thirty-four office bearers and pandits as recognised purohitas of the Mandal. This Mandal although formally attached to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, enjoys a measure of independence to enable the Pandits to carry out their spiritual ministrations to the Hindu community in every walk of life.

The annual report² of the Sabha for 1981 lists the series of activities that the Mandal conducts both in consolidating the educational and religious commitment of the Pandits themselves and the services they offer to the community at large. All the pandits, therefore, are now seriously engaged in propagating Vedic ideals in their respective areas. They have extended their services during religious festivals and also during Ramayan week and Gita week. They deliver sermons, lectures, and participate in functions generally. The theme on all occasions is the propagation of Veda Dharma. The priests are called upon to render religious services at schools, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, old age homes and many other areas of social service.

As stated before these priests are not formally recognised by the South African Government because no formal secular education is involved in their training. Education involving the learning of Sanskrit and Vedic Dharma is, however, compulsory so government recognition becomes difficult because of the absence of evidence of formal education. This situation may, however be corrected because of the attempts to formulate a new policy in the recognition of Hindu priests through moves initiated by the South African Government.

CHAPTER 7

ARYA YUVAK SABHA

The Arya Yuvak Sabha is unique among the organisations affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha because it had existed long before the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha came into existence. The Sabha was established in 1912 and pre-empted the work of the Pratinidhi Sabha. In fact it was the effort made by the Arya Yuvak Sabha that brought the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha into existence. CHotai says:¹ "The proudest achievement of the Sabha has been in the establishment of an ashram for the aged as well as for orphans. The Sabha carried out all its activities at Mayville." The Sabha was able to lease from the Durban Corporation fifty cottages at Clayton Gardens about three miles away. The Clayton Gardens Home for the Aged and the Home for Orphans are now well known throughout South Africa as homes of service.

The Arya Yuvak Sabha was originally started as the Arya Ballah Mitra Mandal, but Swami Shankerananda suggested that the organisation be renamed the Arya Yuvak Sabha. A pamphlet describing the history of the Sabha, makes an observation on its beginnings that later emerged as totally out of keeping with its later achievements.² It observes: "There was nothing ambitious in the main objects of the Sabha. It was the reality of the times and situation that dictated the two initial objects. The birth of the Sabha was obviously a result of concern with a serious situation concerning the preservation of cultural and religious interests". The pamphlet continues: "The spiritual survival of Hindus was being challenged by mighty forces operating all around. It could be met only with dignity and courage and with the inherent greatness of Hinduism itself. To avoid fanaticism and the unholiness springing from it, which misguided sentimentality often breeds, it was necessary that Hindus no longer be ignorant of the eternal verities of the Vedic faith and of the great language in which

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these priceless varieties were conceived and propagated by the great seekers of Truth". These words echo the sentiments that usually run through all situations that spell out Hindu cultural values and interest. The machinery whereby these interests had to be given practical expression had to be created by a group of people whose very limited resources could initially have stifled all enthusiasm. Nevertheless, "two experimental schools were started" by two men who later were honoured for their contributions to the work of the Sabha. These schools were the Arya Yuvak Hindi Night Schools, which provided free education to boys and girls; the one in Mayville and the other at Sea Cow Lake.

A member of the Sabha said in an interview:

"Both the president and the secretary were ardent advocates of Hindi and their devotion to it was almost obsessional. They realised fifty years ago what some of us are, rather belatedly, realising today. That the many facets of our culture are clothed in our mother-tongue and no foreign garment can drape the ideas received by the great Hindu minds with the same dignity and grace".

The birth of the Arya Yuvak Sabha on the 19 April 1912 was an emotively inspired venture by a small group of men imbued with the ideal of the preservation of Hindu and particularly Hindi religio-cultural ideals. With Swami Shankerananda visiting this country at the same time it was inevitable that emotionally charged sentiments would be expressed for the purpose of gaining ground for the work which had very humble beginnings. But positive beginnings they obviously were for as much as they were based on Arya Samaj principles they were equally dedicated to the cause of community development. And community development they saw as "propagating the tenets of the Vedic Religion; serving humanity by educating children, and establishing a home to provide refuge to indigent and the aged persons and children in need of care in the Indian community".³

The work of the Sabha may be considered in three parts: propagation of religious tenets; educational ideals and social welfare. In 1921 Pandit Ishvardutt Vidyalkar, a graduate of Gurukul Kangri, came to Natal as a Vedic missionary. Religious education became a matter of some urgency and one of the more significant results of the work he undertook was the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1925.

In the field of education, however, even further progress was made with the establishment of a number of schools at which first Hindi was taught and later English. The Arya Yuvak Sabha Government-Aided Indian School was built at Bellair Road, Mayville. Later other schools were built by the Sabha in addition to expanding the sizes of existing schools at considerable expense to the Sabha. The Sabha was known to suffer great financial loss under the Group Areas Act which usurped many Indian-owned buildings from their owners. The Sabha was responsible for importing teachers of Hindi from India as it was "strongly felt" that the "vernacular was the gateway to the study of their culture".

At a meeting of the Sabha held in Chatsworth on Sunday, 13 March 1983 much time was spent discussing the Temple of the Sabha now under construction in the grounds of the Aryan Benevolent Home. In the meantime, however, regular religious services are held on Sundays at Clayton Gardens. The construction of the Temple would be a major step in the Sabha's programme of religious education among the inhabitants of both the Children's Home and the Dayanand Gardens Home for the Aged and the people in the surrounding areas. The Sabha is engaged in fund raising. The members of this Sabha are called upon to raise a very large sum of money for this purpose and despite the difficulties the work is undertaken with concern, care and dedication.

The Arya Yuvak Sabha is the parent organisation that brought into existence the Aryan Benevolent Home. The Directors

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of the Home were thus called upon to report on the work of the Home and did so with some information on the progress being made.

A sub-committee of this Sabha, dedicated to religious work, is known as the Prachar Committee. The Prachar Committee has been entrusted with the task of holding religious services in hospitals and private homes and anywhere else where these may be required. A report on the work of Christian missionaries making open inroads into Hindu religious convictions was viewed with deep concern and several members voiced their intention to retaliate with open confrontation if these efforts by Christian missionaries did not cease.

It was stated that the work of the Prachar Committee should be reviewed and that the standard of work attained would be high. Thus priests and priestesses are now being trained in a variety of ways to meet every demand at the religious and cultural level.

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SECTION SIXSOCIO - RELIGIOUS RECONSTRUCTION

Introduction

- Chapter 1. Impact on Religion, Education & Culture
2. Shruddhi and Society
- 3 Status of Women
4. Equality and Justice for All.

INTRODUCTION

Our analysis of the mutual influence of religious and social change has necessarily to consider some of the salient features of socio-religious interaction. We do so while attempting to deal with the problem of socialization and more particularly the problems that confront the movement during the process of social action. We bear in mind firstly that social action in the context in which we discuss it here has necessarily to operate at the cultural level. It is in this context then that we see this mutual interaction and superordinate meaning system which also accounts for the values and norms of interaction in the socialization process.

Religious socialization in our study is a focal point of consideration because of the reciprocal role relationship that exists in the interaction process. Swami Dayananda's insight into the modality of being as the broad framework for social restructuring has not enabled the process to be undertaken with effectiveness but its lasting applications outside the framework of the specific context for which such modality had been conceived has become an effective basis for socialization per se.

Our concern with the fundamental effectiveness of religion as the prime mover in social interaction impinges upon the techniques of casual interaction. As such it may be pertinent to ask if a force as cause once set in motion may become part of a complex of causes that mutually condition each other. If so, it becomes an important part of the explanation of social change albeit intended for one setting but subsequently consequential in another.

Our task is to discover the conditions which influence changes and in so doing pin point the general points of influence which both maximise and minimize such socialization. The emerging pattern as we shall see in this section of the work enables us to distinguish the ability of religion to effect the process of social change. A degree of autonomy is inevitable if any religious institution is to prove effective. We state then in the context

of this study that religious socialization becomes an integral part of the movement because the process of socialization is primarily religious socialization and not a social process independent of the religious process in which such socialization takes place.

The ascendancy of spiritual motives is the underlying key to progressive control of the values in which the objectives of religious action are seen to operate. The Arya Samaj movement in South Africa we understand is entirely motivated within the local context in which the movement operates. The process of socialization we understand to be effected in two contexts. Firstly in the writings of the founder of the movement whose general framework of social change is a prescription for action in the context in which we see the developments taking place and subsequently the conditions of change existing in the social context under discussion. Talcott Parsons¹ discusses at least one aspect of the process of socialization occurring within a specific context.

Yinger² believes that the functional interdependence of religion in society is motivated by three factors, resulting in social change with a degree of religious change becoming inevitable in the process. Our purpose enables us to linger on the functional modality of change resulting from religious motivation as an initiator of change. The Arya Samaj movement, and more particularly the leaders within the movement in this country, would readily admit that while the teachings that motivate the movement focus on the need for modifications of approach to religious action, beliefs and general group structure are inevitably affected by social changes in reciprocal process.

We become aware at this juncture of one fundamental element of the structural modality that the Arya Samaj has intended to maintain in the hope of a lasting influence upon a society that apparently was in need of change. The fundamental elements of the Arya Samaj faith appeared at first to circumscribe the areas of religious action in which radical influence was necessary. The important elements of religion for Arya Samaj have been

clearly indicated and all social interaction had necessarily to occur within the framework of such limitation. The roots of Arya Samaj theology we have pointed out often enough, are inextricably merged in Vedic doctrine. As such they would ordinarily not brook any form of excessive modification. But our study has already outlined what need there has been for a mutual interaction between Arya Samaj theology and Hindu doctrine in general, resulting in an acceptable modification enhancing Hindu perspective in a wider sphere of influence.

We entertain the theory that religion, as we have thus far understood the term, is an essential part of the machinery of law, morality and religio-functional interchange. As such it provides the framework, however complex this may be in some situations, for human interaction to take place at a religious level while at the same time providing a basis for socio-cultural action enabling members of a particular segment of society to live together in an orderly arrangement of social relations as outlined by a specific doctrine. This then is for us the basis for discussion. How the doctrines that influence behaviour patterns become the basis for the social function of religion, and how these doctrines provide for the maintenance of social order are the problems we are to consider in some detail in this section.³

CHAPTER 1

IMPACT ON RELIGION, EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The coming of the Arya Samaj movement to South Africa has been of some religious, educational and cultural significance to the Hindu community here. This is signified by several features of religious thought encountered in the plan of action that was envisaged by the founders of the movement. The draft constitution of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha contains an important aim in the form of a clause which reads:⁴

"To establish, build and maintain schools, halls, temples, libraries, ashrams, gymnasia, warehouses, offices and flats in the interest of the Sabha."

The founders of the movement having been made aware of the call for a total restructuring of educational ideas by Swami Dayananda and having been inspired by the achievement of the Samaj in India with the establishment of the Gurukuls and Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College decided to embark on a programme of service that would include the establishment of schools in various parts of Natal.

The decision to establish educational institutions in India has resulted in considerable impact being made in later years by Arya Samaj schools upon the whole educational edifice in that country. Rudolph and Rudolph⁵, for example, describe this by saying that: "The education activities of the Arya Samaj, a militant Hindu reform organisation, illustrate how social reform movements within Hinduism used education to express their cultural norms and identity. The Arya Samaj sought to strengthen Hinduism against its Christian and Muslim competitors by emphasizing the unity of Hinduism found in early Vedic materials."

We have already explained why two types of educational institutions were brought into existence to carry out this work in education. The one was the Gurukula, patterned on the ancient educational institutions of the same name which laid stress on

the study of Hindu literature, and the other, the conventional college which Arya Samaj named the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College.

At the time of the establishment of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in South Africa educational opportunities for the Indian community were extremely difficult due to the singular lack of facilities in the form of schools, teachers and equipment. An Education Commission appointed in 1909 drew attention to the grave disabilities suffered by Indians in Natal.⁶ These disabilities came in the form of overcrowding, a shortage of schools and trained teachers. The position in 1925 was not much different. The history of Indian education in this country is a record of the unquestionably difficult situation which prevailed from 1869, when the first school for Indians offering education in English was placed under the control of the Natal Education Department.

The story of Indian education, as tragic as it is for a greater part of the history of the Indian people in this country, is heightened by the fact of the immense conflict within the community concerning the choice between religiously oriented education and secular education. Most of the Indian people, more particularly in the Hindu and Muslim communities, were bound to traditional forms of dress and other cultural patterns of life. Although provision was made for a preservation of Indian modes of life in the secular education provided by the Indian Immigrant School Board⁸, prejudice against this began to grow and soon there were expressions of strong feelings about "westernisation" of the Indian community being effected through English medium education.⁹

Oosthuizen and Hofmeyr make the point that the state made no provision for children who in habit and dress did not adhere to Western standards, and that education was used as an instrument to destroy the customs of the Indian child.¹⁰

This engendered a situation of conflict, for quite clearly the desperate yearning for education on the part of Indians enforced the provision of schools by the community itself in the form of

state-aided schools in which secular education was provided while the yearning for the preservation of religious ideals necessitated the provision of religious education. Behr and Macmillan tell us that in 1882 there were no state schools for the Indian communities (the first was built in 1883) whereas ten state-aided schools were functioning with an enrolment of 323 students. In 1893 there were 2 state schools (with a total of 340 students) as compared with 24 state-aided schools with an enrolment of 2 249 pupils. State schools are schools built by the state; state-aided schools were built by the Indian community sometimes with state assistance.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha's decision to establish schools where Hindu and all aspects of Hindu culture could be imparted proved extraordinarily difficult. The establishment of schools involved the provision of school buildings, equipment and teachers. The costs of these proved in many instances to be beyond the means of the community. Nevertheless, many attempts were made with varying degrees of success. In all instances where "success" was achieved the type of education provided was never subject to examination by a board of educators as was the case with government schools under the control of a Board of Education such, for example, as the Natal Education Department.

The education provided by the Hindu community took the form of stories and discourses and incidents from the Ramayana and Mahābhārata. None of the teachers had had any formal training because with the education that was being provided the training of teachers was a formidable problem.¹¹ Two people who were largely responsible for initiating interest in Hindu education were Swami Shankerananda and Swami Bhawani Dayal.

Several Vedic institutions that affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, in reports to the Sabha, submitted evidence of attempting to provide some form of Hindu education despite the very limited resources available whereby such education could meet any standard of success.

In the year 1917 the Second Hindu Literary Conference was

held in Pietermaritzburg which brought into existence "a few schools to impart Hindi".¹²

A Hindi school consisting of 220 pupils classified into six standards is conducted under the direction of the Sabha¹³. It has been established that of the many Vedic institutions affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha most of them attempted to establish Hindi schools. It is, however, difficult to state exactly what was meant by a Hindi school because these could vary from a class of one or two pupils under the direction of a teacher meeting in the lounge of a private house to a class of many children meeting in a classroom of a state-aided school building.

For example, in "January 1931 the Candella Estate Hindi Sangatan was formed. The organisation erected a large school building. The foundation stone of which was laid by the then Mayoress of Durban."¹⁴ The school was reserved for girls only but was erected for the purpose of providing Hindi education.

The Yuvak Arya Samaj of Clairwood in 1933 erected a school building for the provision of Hindi education.¹⁵

On the 20 September 1921 the Arya Samaj in Cato Manor established a school and again in 1931 another building was erected by the same organisation.¹⁶

On the 28 July 1946 the Arya Samaj at Westville opened the doors of its school building to children of the Hindi community.¹⁷

The Nagari Pracharni Sabha of Springfield has had its school building used for both Hindi and English education as a Government-aided school.¹⁸

The Arya Mitra Mandal of Sydenham opened a Hindi school in 1940. This Mandal is one of the organisations that allowed its school to be "held at the homes of the members" of the organisation. However, in 1942 the Essendene Road Indian School was used to impart Hindi education.¹⁹

The Arya Yuvak Mandal of Sea Cow Lake started its school for vernacular education in 1912.²⁰

The Arya Samaj of Plessislaer, conducted its school for many years.²¹

The Arya Yuvak Sabha of Raisethorpe in Pietermaritzburg was able to build a school with financial assistance from the Natal Provincial Administration. The school was opened in 1945 and as it grew in size well wishers in the community contributed funds through which the size of the building was expanded.¹⁹ The Vedic Vidya Pracharak Sabha of Pentrich in Pietermaritzburg had a school in 1932 which provided education for 250 children. The building was considerably expanded a year later and few additional classrooms were added to it.²²

The Arya Samaj of Mount Partridge constructed its school building in 1943 on land donated to it by a public spirited member of the Arya Samaj in the district.²³

The Arya Nau Yuvak Sabha in Raisethorpe in Pietermaritzburg was able to construct a school building with the assistance of the Provincial Authorities. This was completed in 1945.²⁴

The Vedic Yuvak Sabha of Wilgefontein had a school conducted at the homes of its members. A school building was erected in 1943 from donations made to the school by its members.²⁵

The Arya Samaj of Ladysmith opened its school in 1921 through the assistance of local supporters of the movement.²⁶

Each of the organisations mentioned here has been able to submit reports of its activities to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, from which Pandit Nardev was able to compile the information for his work quoted at length here.

The emphasis placed on Hindi education by the community enabled many dedicated persons to assist in the provision of educational facilities whereby Hindi was taught to the children. The work of the Arya Samaj movement then is a factor of considerable importance as evidenced by the number of Arya Samaj organisations that set about collecting funds and providing facilities for

both Hindi and English education. The community however laboured under several difficulties. In addition to its considerable lack of trained teachers, the number of people inspired by the ideas of the Arya Samaj and by either the Gurukulas or D.A.V. Colleges in India, was very small. The influence of the Arya Samaj, however, was felt in the inspiration it provided for the establishment of schools for the express purpose of providing religious education. With the considerable failure on the part of the government to provide secular, English medium education, these schools had to be converted from vernacular schools to English schools thus bringing about a change in emphasis in the kind of education provided for the community.²⁷

An unfortunate feature of the whole education programme of the Indian community is the considerable difficulties it experienced under the various acts which controlled, if not hampered, its work for cultural advancement. Among these were the Pegging Act of 1943 which controlled the acquisition and occupation of urban land. It was, however, the Group Areas Act (Act No. 41 of 1950) which was responsible for most of the losses suffered by the Indian community because according to this act Indians were no longer allowed to own or occupy land in any area not classified for them. They found themselves having to move to Indian areas or areas declared Indian resulting in considerable financial losses for many people.

The process of secularization was initiated in the Hindu community through the education system it was forced to inherit largely through the Cape Town Agreement of 1927. The Cape Town Agreement stressed that Indians would be made to feel more welcome in South Africa if they accepted western standards of life. This is one of the factors that initiated a gradual process of change within the community up to the present time when considerable changes in the economic position of Indians sees these changes escalating even more.²⁸ The secularisation process is not growing very rapidly, which means that the influence of the Arya Samaj or any Hindu religious or cultural organisation is continuously being challenged. Many members of the community now face the daunting task of combining their

modern education system in which more and more secular values are being emphasized with religious interests which receive no doctrinal guidance or any kind of cultural support.

The impact of the Arya Samaj is still nevertheless being felt due to its regular service which mark numerous festivals and other religious occasions. Several people who agreed to being interviewed contributed views on the growth of the Arya Samaj influence upon the community. We record some of the salient points arising from these interviews.

Mr. S.R. was of the view that the Arya Samaj movement took account of the severe restrictions placed upon the Hindu community by legislation banning the import of brides into South Africa.²⁷ The difficulty placed on preachers in a similar way, added considerably, he believed, to the work of the Arya Samaj movement. It has been estimated that at least half the eminent visitors to this country from India in more than fifty years were Arya Samajists. The contribution of the Arya Samaj to the cultural endeavours of the Hindu community as a whole, he saw, therefore, as unique.

The interview with Mr. P.H. was arranged because he is a graduate of the Gurukul Kangri which I was able to visit. This is one of the best known schools of the Arya Samaj in India. Mr. P.H. was a student there between 1927 and 1941 which means that he spent his entire school life at Arya Samaj educational institutions. The primary and secondary school phases were completed at Gurukul Indraprastha and tertiary education at Gurukul Kangri. The Gurukul Kangri, a tertiary level college, was for a time an affiliate of the Punjab University. Among the subjects he studied was the ancient system of medicine, Ayurveda, recognised by the government of India as a legitimate scientific medical system. P.H. studied through the medium of Hindi although Sanskrit and English were compulsory subjects. In addition, he completed studies in History, Geography, Chemistry, Physics and Hinduism. One was able to learn from this interview that no degrees as such were conferred upon graduates but the ancient tutelary titles like Vedalankar, for graduates in Arts, Science,

Politics and Religion; Ayurvedalankar for graduates in Ayurveda; Siddhantalankar for graduates in Hindu theology and Philosophy; Vidyalankar for graduates in Economics and Vidyavachas for graduates in Law, were conferred.

Mr. P.H. was proud of the fact that he had studied at the institutions named, because it afforded him the opportunity of studying at a unique institution. He was convinced that no school or college in South Africa would have enabled him to develop the breadth of outlook on all aspects of life that he was given in India. He was initially inspired, he says, by Prof. Bhai Parmanand. Despite the fact that very few students were known to have gone to India for studies at the Arya Samaj schools, he was of the view that this influence upon religious thinking in South Africa was significant. Despite the fact that all Hindi organisations that came into existence were not necessarily Arya Samaj in name, they were certainly Arya Samaj inspired and influenced into following its principles.

Mr. R.B. of Johannesburg studied at the Gurukul Supa between the years 1939 and 1946. For him the Gurukul system met very adequately the highest standard of education which called for students to be very highly motivated. He was extremely happy to have been part of a unique educational system which required of students a very high standard of moral, ethical and above all religious behaviour. For this reason, the young students were called Brahmacharis. They were required to shave their heads upon entering but leaving a tuft of hair on the crown which symbolised limited attachment to the world. They were largely required, however, to sever all worldly connections until a full educational programme had been completed.

The routine followed at school was a daily programme that commenced at 5 a.m. every day with a bath in cold water, washing of clothes and crockery. Morning prayers required also chanting Vedic mantras, sandhya-havan, followed by Yoga Asanas, and then breakfast. They followed a very strict vegetarian diet at all times.

Sandhya and prayers involving havan were conducted everyday. Classes closed at 4.00 p.m. and a strenuous sports programme was conducted for boys who were very keen particularly at cricket, hockey and swimming. The subjects studied were History, Geography, Science, Mathematics - all through the medium of Hindi. In addition there were studies in Gujarati, English and Sanskrit. Every student was instilled with a pride in and love for Hindu culture. Nationalistic feelings were also inculcated and every student was known as a proud nationalist. This was a boys school that attempted to remain true to the ancient tradition of Hindu cultural life. Even the food that was consumed was always Satvic in content, wholly nourishing and enjoyable. He was proud to have been part of an international community during his stay at the school for in addition to the local boys there were many there from several countries abroad.

His return to South Africa meant that in his exposure to South African life he was admired by thousands of Hindus in this country for his ability to read, write and speak several Indian languages including Sanskrit. It is, however, his contribution to the cultural life of the community that is considered unique. He became the first president of a Hindu economic movement in the Transvaal apart from being President of a provincial Gujarati organisation and an official of a national one. His studies enabled him to acquire a very broad and national outlook on life which has always enabled him to steer clear of many pitfalls. He maintains a deep interest in cultural and religious matters despite his involvement in a thriving business he owns. His insight into the Hindu scriptures makes him one of the foremost students of Hinduism in South Africa where his influence among the community is widely recognised.

Pandit H.A. of Johannesburg is also a graduate of Gurukul Supa. He was proud of the fact that although Arya Samaj work appears to be on the wane, this is due in large measure to the fact that the Government of India has adopted as national policy many of the reforms introduced by the Arya Samaj movement.

He now/.....

He now lives in Johannesburg but is a very influential religious leader who spreads Arya Samaj principles among people in the province. He advocates all that Arya Samaj stands for such as declaring Hindi the national language of India, allowing widows to remarry, social reconstruction through adequate schools in industry and commerce. He believes that the Government of India has introduced all these programmes of reform because they were already adopted by the Arya Samaj in its specific areas of concern.

Mr. H.A. believes that the establishment of the Arya Samaj in 1875 and its adoption of reforms enabled them to proceed along a very positive course of nation building which actually prepared the ground for the coming of Mahatma Gandhi, who easily adapted to it and later continued the programme of reconstruction which laid the path to independence.

Mr. H.M. of Johannesburg now 79 years old was greatly influenced by the Arya Samaj. He was always impressed by the lack of rigidity and the exclusion from society of caste prejudices. Although he was not a committed Arya Samajist he was deeply aware of its enormous influence upon the community. He thus gave open support to its programme of reform which called for equal education for girls. He openly supported the Gurukul system and encouraged many girls to join. It was his influence which enabled many girls from South Africa, particularly in the Transvaal, to go to India to join various Gurukuls.

He firmly believes that all Arya Samaj principles are very constructive and while being aware of the prejudices that worked against the movement he was one of its great supporters. He is accepted as a man of considerable influence in the Gujarati community in South Africa and he is respected as a leader of his people for this.

Thus Arya Samaj he felt was responsible for bringing about modern education which encouraged breaking away from rigid orthodoxy and enhanced modernisation. He still advocated equality for all, condemns caste and communal prejudices and holds Swami

Dayananda in great esteem as a reformer whose influence has helped to make Hindu life in South Africa respectable.

He is, however, of the view that the initial opposition to the Arya Samaj was unnecessary. But initial opposition, he said, to all reform movements is to be expected. All people have a tendency to view with suspicion reforms of any kind. The initial response had necessarily to be hostile because of the Arya Samaj's open hostility to age old practices within Hinduism. Idol worship, or what is regarded as idol worship, is sometimes frowned on, but most people fail to appreciate the true value of worship in this form. Idol worship is worship of God through the use of visual objects. The task of Arya Samaj is to learn to respect all forms of worship, because not only is this the common sense thing to do, it is also part of Hindu life and thinking which advocates respect for all religions and also respect for all forms of worship.

Mrs. B. was less responsive to the interview but was happy to express her feelings concerning the broadness of outlook she developed as a student at the Gurukul Supa. She spent only about six years there but had learnt much and was appreciative of the part played by that education in moulding her life style. Her marriage, however, has precluded her from taking an active part in community affairs but she was always given her whole-hearted support to every form of cultural, religious and educational innovation that has contributed to the good of the community.

Mr. B.G. of Port Elizabeth is a Gujarati speaking gentleman dedicated to the Arya Samaj cause through the influence of his parents. He and an older brother were sent to India by their parents in 1922 and enrolled at the Gurukul Supa near Navasari. He was a student at the Gurukul for six months when fate dealt his family a severe blow. His older brother contacted an incurable disease and died suddenly. His parents were driven to remorse and forced him to return home immediately as the tragedy was unbearable for them. His own commitment to Arya Samaj ideals, however, has not diminished and has helped in

every way possible to build up Arya Samaj work in the Eastern Cape. The construction of the Hindu Temple in Port Elizabeth is a mark of his dedication and has proved to be a sample of the work being done in the province for Arya Samaj teachings.

The attempt to ascertain the number of people who belong to the Arya Samaj movement or who have in some way been influenced by its teachings was not very successful. The Secretary of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha allowed the writer access to his records. But as the information was not based upon any form survey either official or unofficial, the figures were not considered reliable. They were, however, derived from reports submitted by affiliate organisations for the purpose of compiling an official report of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Close to one hundred thousand people from all the four language groups within the Arya Samaj movement are said to be members of the organisation or have been influenced by it in one way or another. This accounts for almost one third of the Hindi speaking people, approximately 10% of Gujarati speaking people, two percent Telugus and less than one per cent Tamils. The Arya Samaj message has been carried to a wide cross-section of the Hindi speaking community and membership ranges from professionals to labourers from every economic and social background and from every class of society. The movement continues to spread because of the work being done by the organisation through its publications and more especially through its visitors who came to this country as guest lecturers and speakers. Their influence is felt and some of their ideas become acceptable to the community at large in limited ways.

CHAPTER 2

SHUDDHI AND SOCIETY

The shuddhi movement by the Arya Samaj played a singularly responsible and fairly significant role in reclaiming 100 000 Malkana Rajuputs who had been converted during the Moplah rebellion in Malabar in 1921. Since then many hundreds of people have returned to the Hindu fold primarily due to the work of the Arya Samaj even after the death of Dayananda.¹

The Shuddhi Sanskar was introduced into South Africa almost immediately after the establishment of the Arya Yuvak Sabha. The bane of Hindu life both in India and elsewhere is the problem of conversion to other faiths by Hindus. Many millions have left the faith for a number of reasons as described before. Arya Samajists like many other followers of Hindu movements and others have been particularly perturbed by the work of Christian and Muslim missionaries. The facts of poverty and ignorance within Hindu society have featured most prominently as reasons for this massive apostasy and efforts by Hindu organisations to counteract these forces have been courageous.

Of the five largest Hindu organisations in South Africa² the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has been most concerned with the problem. Its institution of the ceremony of Shuddhi Sanskar is the most important result of this concern.

Swami Shankerananda and Swami Bhawani Dayal were the first persons to carry out a campaign of reconversion in South Africa.³ Swami Shankerananda instituted this ceremony in this country and then carried out a vigorous campaign to dissuade many from converting to other faiths. The Shuddhi Sanskar is a religious rite, a purification ceremony, performed for all who return to the Hindu fold from religions to which they had converted. This area of concern has featured prominently in discussions at Hindu conferences. The South African Hindu Maha Sabha conference held in May 1982 is a case in point. A plea was made for the Shuddhi Sanskar to be retained and encouraged in

the light of missionary activities in more recent years.

Dr. Hofmeyer's findings in a recent research project consider at some length the problem of conversion from Hinduism.⁵ Hindus, he says, identify themselves as Hindus in terms of home language. The irony of this is that the home language of most Hindus in South Africa is English with the result that most of this identification can't be measured in specifically religious terms. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of sub-group (in this case language) identity. However, the work of neo-Hindu movements⁶ does institute a new sense of identity among many Hindus with the result that belief in specific religious doctrines helps to replace the earlier forms of identification.

Prof. G.C. Oosthuizen in his study of the work of the Pentecostal churches raises the question of the reason for this form of protestantism being so effective among the Hindu community, more particularly in Metropolitan Durban.⁷ His research has revealed several findings which Dr. Hofmeyr's work confirms. No doubt traditional forms of ritual Hinduism leave many Hindus with a sense of emptiness and lack of religious inspiration. Reasons, however, that generally emerge show interesting facts of the Hindus who had converted to Christianity. Ten gave their reasons as material ones with healing being the most common. Other factors to emerge were marriage, conversion of a relative and others had "found the truth".

Hofmeyr's most significant finding is that Tamil and Telegu groups suffered the biggest losses to Christianity. A proportion of only 1,1 per cent of Hindi people had converted as compared to 5,9 per cent of Tamils and 4,2 per cent of Telegus. There were no converts among Gujaratis. Evidently converts came from lower income groups and from those groups whose linguistic competence is least well preserved.⁸

Hofmeyr's comparison of the figures reflecting differences

between/.....

between Chatsworth in Durban and Reservoir Hills in the same city is even more interesting. Chatsworth consisting of persons of a lower economic standing has produced one in every five members of the Hindu community becoming converts to Christianity, whereas Hindus in Reservoir Hills who have a high economic standing have produced one for every twenty. Hofmeyr says that, "Pentecostalism does not flourish in the more affluent communities which also explains the fact that its impact has been less effective in the area under discussion." (The area under discussion being Reservoir Hills).⁹

The Arya Samaj movement together with other neo-Hindu movements and others in South Africa needs to take account of a significant comment by Dr. Hofmeyr. He says, "The future success of Hinduism in South Africa would appear to depend upon the extent to which neo-Hindu movements succeed in effecting real commitment from the Hindus in the environment in which most needs are satisfied by Western secular culture."¹⁰

The problem of conversion for most if not all Hindu organisations rests with the problems of commitment and the resulting enthusiasm for work which emerges from such commitment. While it is true that Hinduism is not a proselytizing religion, it is also true that Hindus need to take cognisance of the facts of religious organisation and the healthy situations within the community that emerge when such situations are well maintained.

The Shuddhi Sanskar is a purificatory rite. The act of purification, however, Arya Samajists would say, is an act by which men confirm that they would lead "pure" lives. By purity is understood living a clean wholesome life with no indulgence in illicit or extramarital sex, no drinking of alcoholic liquors, no smoking, trying to observe strict vegetarianism and observing all the other moral and ethical codes that go with belief in the eternal truths of the Vedas. The Shuddhi ceremony is therefore not meant primarily for people who reconvert to Hinduism but for all people who have "strayed" as it were from the path of Dharma as advocated by the Vedas.

Thus the/.....

Thus the Shuddhi ceremony is performed for all people who wish to participate in such a rite if they have had no problems about maintaining faith in the religion into which they were born. The Shuddhi ceremony, however, has come to be associated with converts because of the emphasis placed upon the ceremony in their case. It was, however, never intended to regard the ceremony as an act of purification because people who had embraced other faiths were regarded as unclean in any way. The Shuddhi Sanskar was a formal rite by which converts were reminded of their religious disabilities as advocated by Hinduism and in this way more meaningful religious commitment was solicited.

CHAPTER 3

STATUS OF WOMEN

The advances made by the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa in religious reformation came largely as a result of the advances it achieved in other areas of life such as education. The religious conception among Hindi speaking people throughout Natal were to alter radically from old obsolete ideas to reformed ones which introduced modified modes of worship and religious behaviour among them. It was generally agreed by many in the community that the impact of the ideas spread, not necessarily by the movement per se, but the gospel it preached, and the education reforms it advocated had a marginal influence on the community. Arya Samajists soon came to realise the value of spreading the message through the medium of English where a greater number of people were able to receive it. Through this spread of ideas too a greater number of women became more accessible to its message and soon women became a focal part of its doctrinal hopes.

The first school for Indians offering education in English was opened as Behr and Macmillan have already told us, in 1869.¹ Their report of a statement by the then superintendant of Education is very significant. He is reported to have stated that "Indians refused to have their girls taught to read".² The position concerning the education of women remained static for a long time. Forty years later there were 3 284 Indians at school in Natal and of this number only 324 were girls.³ Indian parents have for a very long time considered the education of girls unnecessary. The following table gives an indication of the position of females in their quest for education.

TABLE 1

Year	Males	Females	Schools
1869	34	Nil	3
1871	69	10	3
1875	180	20	5
1881	206	22	7

Rambiritch concludes that the Indian parents did not regard education for girls as much of an asset.⁴ Indian parents would not allow their daughters to mix with boys or be taught by a male teacher. Because Indian education was still in its infancy there was no feasibility in establishing separate schools for girls. The figures which reflect the attendance at school by girls indicate the position for the Indian community. Most of the girls attending school then were Christian. Hindu and Muslim parents remained conservative in their attitudes.

TABLE 2

Year	Boys	Girls	Schools
1885	1 400	223	12
1886	1 428	274	25

These figures show only the attendances at primary schools. In 1930 there were 7 girls enrolled at all the secondary schools in Nata. In 1952 the number had increased to 666.⁵

No doubt the problem of education for girls occupied the minds of several educationists. An inspector of education in the Indian Immigrant School Board which controlled Indian education before it passed to the jurisdiction of the Natal Education Department suggested that schools opened under the direction of European women teachers might be a solution.⁶ A further suggestion was that Indian women teachers might be imported from India. In 1889 the first Indian woman teacher came from India to work at a school established by the St. Aidan's Mission.⁷ There was a gradual change of attitude which meant that by 1895 there was less opposition to the education of Indian women but still not much enthusiasm for it either.⁸

At the time of the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1925 virtually no Indian women in South Africa had received any secondary or tertiary education. The gradual introduction of education among them came about only when serious rethinking

on the matter occurred within the community over a protracted period of time. A burden of isolation existed with some women who wished to follow their talents to higher levels of advancement. Few were allowed an education but others again were permitted to participate in concepts if they could play musical instruments or sing. The tendency to allow women more freedom to pursue their interests in education or other walks of life opened up many new opportunities for them.

The University of Natal first allowed Indian women to enrol as students in 1936.⁹ The tendency for a gradual increase in the number of women now taking to education meant that the position could alter quite rapidly. The status of women began to change and soon they began to be recognised as free and independent persons with individual, separate wishes. Hilda Kuper describes their position: "Indian women are generally considered extensions of their husbands, but the more highly educated women are rated by their own accomplishments. Their status is a personal achievement sometimes attained in the face of strong family opposition and until a few years back in face of strong social opposition."¹⁰ Within the Arya Samaj movement opposition as such was reduced to a minimum because of the advocacy engendered in favour of emancipation of women in all walks of life.

In 1947 forty-seven girls attended secondary schools throughout Natal. In 1955 the number had swelled to 781. By 1959, however, between twenty and thirty women had obtained degrees of Bachelor of Arts at the Natal University, one had a Master's degree, there were eleven doctors and two women lawyers.¹¹

Since 1960 the number of female students at universities in South Africa has increased at the rate of 14,414 per cent, while male enrolment grew by 9,9 per cent per annum. As a result females represented a growing proportion of the total student population increasing from 11 per cent in 1960 to 22,3 per cent in 1974.¹² Prof. Greyling suggests that, "The fact that they (women students) remain under the supervision of their parents is possibly an important reason why they

are allowed/.....

are allowed to enter university."¹³

Figures supplied by the University of Durban-Westville from administration files indicate the following position of women students at the university.¹⁴

1981	1 828 female students
1982	1 997 female students
1983	2 265 female students

The establishment of the University of Durban-Westville has been a major factor in the educational advancement of Indian women in South Africa. The implications of the rapid growth rate of the number of females at the D.W. are that females are likely to represent a growing proportion of the student population which could increase from 30,1 per cent in 1974 to 35,4 per cent in 1980 and 40,7 per cent in 1990.¹⁵ These estimates supplied by Prof. Greyling are already proving to be incorrect as the figure 2 265 for 1983 already represents more than 40% of the total enrolment for the year.

Among Hindu religious organisations, the Arya Samaj was among the first to openly advocate the education of women and girls. If the number of economically and professionally active women is considerable it is partly due to the encouragement received from this quarter. The visit to the country by members of the Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya in July 1934 helped considerably to enhance the reputation of women and girls who from then on exerted a strong influence in changing attitudes.¹⁶

A notable feature of the tremendous increase in the number of women graduates in the Hindu community is that traditional patterns of life, more particularly in the domestic situation, are expected to undergo enormous changes. Education, and more particularly the kind of western education that Indians receive in South Africa, had a definite effect on religion and religious attitudes. For example, where the mother in the family was responsible in many homes for the ritual practices associated with worship, the new educational backdrop that now features in many homes with mother and daughters graduating

form college and university ritual religion will undoubtedly be subjected to drastic rethinking. While older people may adopt sympathetic attitudes to these practices there are indications that younger people will be less likely to do so. The gap in the attitudes results from demands by young people for a new system of religious training, involving totally new religious ideas, values, norms and above all teachings.

That some of these demands are met by the neo-Hindu movements is acknowledged. It nevertheless rests with organisations like the Arya Samaj to respond with more positive support for the general trend evident.

At the present time, by far the most significant role specifically assigned to women within the movement, is the priesthood. Arya Samaj women have been ordained as priestesses in considerable numbers with most of them having come from the many Arya Stri Samajes affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Arya Stri Samaj as the name indicates is an Arya Samaj for women only and within this organisation considerable work is done dealing with the problems and success attained by women within the movement.

Two women members of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha were interviewed at great length for their views concerning the role of women in society. The first interviewee enjoys the reputation for being a woman of considerable standing because of her notable contribution to the Arya Samaj cause. She also is an ordained priest with considerable experience in religious work having officiated at a very large number of weddings and other ceremonies in the community. Her views concerning the emancipation of women have been a source of inspiration to many members of the Samaj.

The Arya Samaj movement had its birth in India in 1875, some fifteen years after the arrival of the first Indians in Natal. It wasn't until 1909 that the Ved Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg came into existence. This was followed in 1912 with the formation of the Arya Yuvak Sabha to be followed yet again with

the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, the present organisation holding national strength and influence. Its formation in 1925 marked a period of considerable influence upon Hindus generally which followed the acceptance of Swami Dayananda as a man of considerable religious authority and inspiration. It was the coming of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha that resulted in Hindu Indians becoming aware of the fact that festivals like Moharam Tajya was not a Hindu festival but a Muslim one. Swami Shankerananda's influence was largely responsible for reminding Hindus of their own heritage which fell into neglect due to their lamentable lack of educational facilities, which could have kept them informed of higher religious commitment. Soon Hindu interest in many non-Hindu festivals like Christmas, etc. waned and a new interest in specifically Hindu festivals began to assume a new stance.

Both women interviewed were extremely proud of the achievements of the Arya Samaj. The introduction of women to the priesthood and other leading religious activities was one of the main reasons for their own realisation of their neglect of religious responsibilities and how a new religious consciousness could be reintroduced into their own homes. Not only was Arya Samaj influence being felt throughout South Africa but both interviewees felt highly optimistic about its international, global growth; more particularly in countries where Hindus had settled in large numbers. The coming of Swami Dayananda they felt meant a rebirth of Hinduism as it has never been known before. This was particularly significant because Hindu missionaries were becoming increasingly aware of the serious neglect of Hindu religious and cultural ideals.

Some Arya Samaj influence in South Africa brought the obnoxious practices of child marriage and caste system to an end. While it was easy enough to influence Hindu thinking on marriageable ages particularly for girls, the problem of caste, more especially in the Gujarati community was somewhat difficult. Arya Samaj influence was, however, responsible for educating Hindus to the belief that even if the caste structure as such was to be retained the caste prejudices that often accompanied

caste distinction was unnecessary. Among Hindu people the practice of wearing a veil by the bride at her wedding was a common practice. All Arya Samaj weddings were soon to rule out this practice and brides soon took to raising their heads with beaming pride while the sacred rite was being performed.

The Arya Samaj became the first organisation to openly advocate widow remarriage which meant that many women in South Africa were freed from the almost criminal practice of confining them to a life of seclusion enforced by age old traditions in earlier days. The dowry system which was also imparted into South Africa was totally banned by the Arya Samaj. Both women interviewed felt that some of these practices had their origins in the religious books that Swami Dayananda condemned and were happy with Arya Samaj influence in having them removed. The system had obtained in India for many centuries where in many instances untold hardships were experienced by many families. The system which required the bride's parents to provide large sums of money, jewelry and other possessions in the care of the groom before a marriage would be solemnised, was responsible for many families incurring untold debts which they were never able to liquidate in a short time. This often left them in deep debt for many years after the marriage, thus making them virtual slaves to a system they neither loved nor supported but followed only to satisfy the whims of a customary practice no one could advocate with any logical explanation.

The Arya Samaj abolished the practice and brought new life to the community which was previously riddled with untold hardships for believing it to be a sacred requirement.

The interviewees were able to elaborate on the role played by many women in the Hindi community whose emancipation led to their leading exemplary lives. Because of this women came to the fore in playing leading roles in community affairs more especially through joining the priesthood and numerous other professions like education, medicine, law, etc. At least one Hindi woman was well known as a novelist having published an English novel.

The third interviewee was a former student of an Arya Samaj Gurukul in India. She will be referred to here as Mrs. K.D. of Johannesburg. She was among the first Hindu women in South Africa to receive a secondary education. She was sent to India by her parents and enrolled at the famous Arya Kanya Ma havidyalya in Baroda, India. This was a Gujarati medium school and was chosen because Mrs. K.D. was Gujarati speaking. She proceeded to India in 1935 in the company of several other girls and boys whose families were inspired by the Arya Samaj call to rejuvenate and re-educate young people to the new values advocated by the Arya Samaj. Mrs. K.D. spent seven years at the Gurukul before returning to South Africa to form parts of a new breed of emancipated women taking a new view of Hindu traditional life.

Mrs. K.D. was happy to explain that her stay in India was 'refreshing' and very inspiring. She was educated to the Arya Samaj ideals and was happy to participate in the system which inculcated in her new religious values. Apart from the Gujarati she spoke she also studied English, Hindi and Sanskrit. The Gurukul was a purely girls' school. Her parents paid the fees which were not high and the boarding facilities were most satisfactory. A strictly vegetarian diet was followed and a most wholesome, health diet was emphasized. The daily programme called for rising at the first bell at 5 a.m. They were expected to perform a havan (fire ceremony) before proceeding to early morning exercises. Each girl was given a sacred thread (chonai) to signify her initiation into Hindu life. This initiation signified her rejection of the caste system and her following a disciplined Hindu life. They were expected to chant verses from the Vedas which they learnt in the religious education class.

Mrs. K.D. admitted that the visit to South Africa by a group of girl guides from the Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya in 1934 was the source of her inspiration to join the school in Baroda. Several other girls were similarly inspired. Pt. Nardev Vedalankar describes this visit by the students.¹⁷ The visit was obviously very unique because it was perhaps the only time in the history of the Indian community that a group of students had ever

visited here to display their physical and gymnastic skills. Pt. Nardev says, "The excellent displays of items such as Indian club swinging, feats of Yoga asanas, archery, dagger-drill, sword fight, held large audiences spellbound and captivated their hearts."¹⁸ Pt. Nardev also believes that, "The Guides exerted tremendous influence in enhancing the prestige of Indian womanhood in this country."¹⁹

The popular Indian weekly magazine "Illustrated Weekly of India" focussed on this school during the Arya Samaj Centenary celebrations. The school was started in Etola near Baroda in 1925. It is now situated on a 25 hectare site in a suburb of Baroda. It says that the Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya is a residential public school for girls based on the Gurukul system. Up until 1950 it had its own syllabus and awarded its own degrees. Later it adopted Government recognised courses and affiliated its colleges to recognised universities. Special bursaries and other scholarships are granted to Adivarsis, Harijans and other "backward and scheduled" castes. Girls of all castes and creeds study there. Mrs K.D. took advantage of her parents' willingness to send her to Baroda to study at this institution, and she like several of her friends is deeply appreciative of the opportunity she had of studying there in a free and 'emancipated' education system.

During the year 1983, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha marked the centenary of Swami Dayananda's death with a series of meetings. One of the more significant such gatherings was the occasion on which no less than sixty women members of the Sabha were ordained as priests. The movement has thus earned for itself the unique distinction of admitting into its fold such a large group of ordained ministers dedicated to the task of community service. The women now constitute the organisation known as the Maha Mahila Swadyaya Mandal which requires them to become committed to intensive study and propagation of the religious message of the Arya Samaj. They encouraged the holding of study groups which are now proving to be very popular in the community. As ordained members they hope to revive the religious spirit which has been neglected for some time. Upon enrolling as members of the Swaydyaya Mandal they are asked to enter into

a contract known as a Vrata Grahanam by which they pledge themselves to work for spreading the message of the Vedas, to always act in accordance with Vedic teachings, to study religious books and to do the work of the Sabha as a sacred duty.

Mrs. B.G. was interviewed on the reasons for her enthusiastic association with Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. She was drawn into the organisation through her local association with the Sarasvathi Mahila Mandal which encouraged women living in a southern suburb of Durban to meet for the purposes of conducting a religious service for women and girls. She was appointed as a delegate to meetings of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and she soon found her commitment to the cause growing with greater familiarity with the life and work of Swami Dayananda.

Her commitment arises from her realisation of the serious need there is for more lay preachers to minister to the community. The problem of conversion to other religions is a serious one for her so her dedication to the work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha arises from the desire to be a part of the work the Sabha is doing for the community. It is particularly necessary that all Hindu women are united to a single cause and for her the life and work of Swami Dayananda is the necessary catalyst for such work. This is really a uniting force and would lessen the divisive forces within the community.

Her strongest feeling arises from the fact that had it not been for the Arya Samaj, "we women would not have been emancipated". "We might have had to stay in purdah and kept in ignorance," she says. "Because of the Arya Samaj we have been given our rightful place in life. And today we women play a very active part in cultural activities. In fact today we are the leaders in some of the fields. Thanks to the Arya Samaj for this."

Mrs. A.M. admitted readily to being upset about the specific feature of the teachings of the Arya Samaj. She was of the view that while Vedic teachings were responsible for bringing

the attention of women to the glory of the teachings of Hinduism, a shift in emphasis from the epics and puranas had one unfortunate feature, namely loss of familiarity with the lives of some of the great women of Sanskrit literature.

Mrs A.M. said she was aware of the need there was for women in Hindu society to be reminded of the great women of Sanskrit literature. For even though Swami Dayananda may have had difficulties with the epics and more particularly the puranas there was no doubt that even if they were purely literary figures, there was a portrayal of greatness in the lives of the great women of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and other works. She was of the view that Valmiki, the ascetic, for example, wrote his Rāmāyana fully aware of the importance of tapas (austerity), and swādhyāya (study of Vedas). She was of the view that it never was Valmiki's intention, nor Vyasa's either, to replace the Vedas with books of their authorship. All they did was to add a very human, if not historical touch to Hindu culture by extolling the lives of some of the great women like Sita, Draupadi, Gāndhārī and others. In more recent times Meera and even Sarada Devi, wife of Sri Ramakrishna, were not without their qualities of greatness however much they may have differed theologically from Arya Samaj principles. Kalidasa's Shakuntala exemplified Indian femininity to the extent that few Arya Samaj ideas could and they had to be seen to be emulated by the general run of Hindu women in all parts of the world. Although she wasn't familiar with the biographies of women who rose to high levels of attainment outside these works she was aware of great women in both North and South India. And if women in South Africa could be reminded of these heroic figures in both their religious and secular life some inspiration would emanate therefrom for their religious guidance.

CHAPTER 4

EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

During the course of the year 1983 the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha attempted to focus attention on several aspects of its own commitment to religious values. The feature of its activities for the year centred around the death of Swami Dayananda which commemorated the centenary of the event. Among the most notable meetings held during the year was one at which the Chief Minister of Kwazulu, a member of the Zulu Royal family was feted. Among the reasons given for conferring honour on the Zulu leader was recognition of his contribution to the cause of justice for all people in South Africa. The event was unique because the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha convened a large meeting to which were invited members of the Hindu and Indian Communities and also the Zulu community of Stanger. In a show of solidarity between the Indian and Zulu peoples of Northern Natal, the meeting was aimed at demonstrating what feelings for human justice existed between the communities. The Chief Minister was given the title, Rashtriya Pita ('Apostle of Peace').

The meeting was one of the more unique among the many held by the Sabha as it came closer than any other to demonstrating the Sabha's concern for political and social justice in addition to the cause of religious justice for which it is known.

At several of the meetings held during the year reference was often made to the fact that the Arya Samaj movement subscribed to the principles of justice and liberty through its stated decalogue.

The seventh principle concerns love and justice and exhorts Aryans to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles of love, righteousness and justice. The tenth principle calls for subordination and liberty and requests that men should subordinate themselves to the laws of society calculated to promote the well-being of all.¹

In an address to members of the Arya Samaj at its headquarters during the centenary year of the Samaj in 1975 the Prime Minister of Mauritius referred to the principles of democracy in society. He said: "We are tied down by natural and inseparable relations and our individual well-being is not at all conceivable much less realisable except through the well-being of others."²

The Arya Samaj's social reform movement embraced cow protection, women's education, end of child marriage, remarriage of widows, eradication of untouchability, advocacy of vegetarianism, ending alcoholism and recognition of one's worth according to one's karma and swabhava and not according to one's heredity.³

It would appear from the principles advocated within the movement that for the religious norms to become functionally meaningful patterns of action reflecting the personality of the member of the movement and interaction in relationship of a certain kind must take place. The Arya Samaj, however, does not strictly define or explain the pattern of action within a clearly enunciated mechanistic technique. The socially mediated experience in interaction with other persons results in the development of characteristically human psychological structures in which religious and social norms form an important component.

In the Arya Samaj, reciprocal relationships function along a mode of technique that rests heavily on situational standards, very much as Swami Dayananda did. He becomes therefore the model as Parsons describes it for religious socialisation to become functional.⁴

In a newsletter published by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha on the 1 March 1983, several programmes were outlined that were to be observed during the course of the centenary year.⁵ The members of the Samaj, however, have constantly been reminded that if a hand of friendship could be extended to non-Hindus in a show of solidarity, necessity demands that such should begin with solidarity being seen to be maintained by Hindus with other Hindus. Thus the discrimination practised within the community had first to end before expressions could be made outside the community.

The birth of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was marked by a call among members of the Hindi community to display total commitment to the new approach to religious and more particularly social values by eradicating caste prejudices. At least five and a half per cent of the members of the Brahmin caste among the Hindi community arrived in South Africa in 1860.⁶ They were followed by other Brahmins later. Hilda Kuper quoting from the Report of the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce of 1877 says that 21% (some 1 628 persons) were of high Brahmin caste who arrived in South Africa in 1875-6. It becomes clear that of the four language communities within the Hindu religious group in South Africa, the Hindi speaking people had the largest number of members of the Brahmin caste within it. This heterogeneity among Hindi people tended to accentuate caste consciousness and caste differences among them more than it ever obtained among Tamil or Telugu people. Among Gujarati people, however, the case was totally different. Caste consciousness therefore became a serious problem in some instances and appreciation of this fact led to several steps being taken by the Arya Samaj movement to eradicate the problems. The reaction from caste Hindus was often vehement if not acrimonious. But commitment to the ideals the Samaj set itself was, however, one of the outstanding features of work within the movement. Now members of the Samaj, those holding the surname Maharaj or Singh, feel proud of the fact that a former president of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha belonged to one of the so-called lower castes. More correctly a Shudra. Hilda Kuper correctly says that the caste system can only operate indirectly in South Africa, because the traditional view held by Indians in India is absent in this situation.⁸ Despite this, however, the role played by the Arya Samaj in eliminating the system has been significant.

The integration of the individual person into the social system depends quite clearly on his acquisition of and conformity to the cognitive and normative definitions of the group. This process of integration and adaptation to accepted norms is a form of socialization which clearly spells out a code of

conformity/.....

conformity to Arya Samaj principles. The socialization includes a process of assimilation by the individual Arya Samajist to the cultural element defined by Dayananda but explained in local terms by Pandit Nardev and others within the movement. Socialization includes the whole process of assimilation with the local environment.

The prejudices that obtain within the community are particularly predominant within specific social and religious situations. Marriage is seldom contracted by parties across caste lines although this is known to be changing. But soon after the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and for at least three decades thereafter the difficulties that obtained were not easily overcome. The influence of the Arya Samaj, however, helped considerably to lessen the burden of prejudice by appealing to Hindus to adopt a more open view on the matter.

The success achieved by the Arya Samaj has resulted in the escalation of inter-caste marriages and also a certain accentuation of the differences between the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and another Hindi religio-cultural organisation representative of the Hindi speaking people in South Africa.

Even in the present year caste prejudices are known to exist. These are, however, no different from those that obtain in any other community in South Africa, including non-Hindu ones. A general appeal to the community to observe the rules of social equality has found much support in the appeal being made in a wider situation in the whole country at a political level. With South Africa's pre-occupation with the racial prejudice being a focal point of attention, the general rethinking going on among South Africans as a whole has a very salutary effect on what caste prejudices are found within the Hindu community in the country.

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SECTION SEVEN

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

AN INTERPRETIVE SUMMARY OF THE

MODE OF INFLUENCE OF THE

ARYA SAMAJ ON HINDUISM

IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this chapter we summarise our findings on the work of the Arya Samaj movement as a religious action system within a segment of South Africa's Hindu community. This interpretive summary discusses the mode of religious expression within the movement in terms of the superordinate meaningfulness defined by both its theoretical structure, (with which we also discuss its culture value) and its organisational structure which contributes to the influence its belief system has on Hinduism in South Africa.

THEORETICAL STRUCTURE

The Arya Samaj doctrine finds its highest level of expression in the teachings of Swami Dayanand Sarasvathi. Its symbolism lies rooted in the Vedas, more especially the Samhitas which he regarded as revealed authority. The Vedas reflect the cognitive beliefs of all Arya Samajists, whose modes of belief and expression are intended to modify socio-cultural patterns of behaviour within modern Hinduism. The superordinate meaningfulness of the entire Arya Samaj doctrine lies in Vedic Truth which the Samaj contends expresses its highest values in specific aspects of its doctrinal content. This doctrinal content is referred to as Swamantavya-mantavya which Swami Dayananda enumerated in his Satyārtha Prakash.¹ The Samaj sees the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda as being produced and revealed by the Supreme and Perfect Being, Para-Brahman, who possesses the attributes of Self existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Who is also Omnipotent and universally adored.²

The Vedic symbolism is further extended in the endeitic relation that man has with the highest concept of Truth and Supreme Happiness. Within the Arya Samaj, attempts are made to understand the philosophical implications of the teachings advocated but the movement functions within a limited sphere of conceptual discourse. However, basic teachings on God, salvation and the purpose of worship are given.³

Swami Dayananda's ethical system is underlined by his belief in Dharma as the practice of equitable justice together with that of truthfulness in action.

The concept of Samskaras takes on a modified significance within the movement in South Africa. The teachings are given with particular emphasis on particular tenets which find favour with conceptual modes in places like the orphanage and old age home.

The superordinate symbols employed within Arya Samaj concepts such as Vedic Truth, Om, Shuddhi, Brahmacharya and service to man, reflect on situations within the movement. These form the core of the spiritual symbolism found within the Samaj and bear out what Saksena⁴ regards as, not a mystic religion, but a mode of life that gives Hinduism an accentuated ethos. They in fact guide and sustain the true religiosity on which the movement is based. For Arya Samajists living as they do in a South Africa far removed from the Indian situation, their symbols of religious conceptualisation are a bulwark of religious affiliation which sanctify religious behaviour and belief. Eliade⁵ observes that this stage underlies the existential values of religious symbolism which opens up levels of religious reality that would otherwise remain closed to any form of commitment much less meaning. Thus the superordinate meaningfulness of the Arya Samaj movement translates for Arya Samajists in particular and many Hindus in general, their human, cultural situation into the cosmological terms implied by the ancient faith they follow. The devotees thus became assured of the whole 'point' of religious affiliation and commitment and the total movement comes alive in more meaningful ways than many have been able to find in other forms of worship.

CULTIC VALUE

Closely allied to the teachings of Swami Dayananda are the principles on which the Arya Samaj movement was formed.

"His creation, the Arya Samaj, postulates in principle, equal justice for all men and all nations, together with equality of the sexes."⁶ This equality it would appear is built on the act of purification and ennoblement which the Samaj in South Africa has accepted as the means for its spiritual growth. Pandit Nardev⁷ says that worship is a useful means of purifying and ennobling life. Such worship frees man from sin and pollution and from it follows every form of religious endeavour.

Dayananda's thesis of action and creed of battle were obviously formulated by his day to day experience of the wickedness he saw all around him. From this arose the serious intention to institute reforms in society. The whole purpose of prayer and participation in every religious act is directed at "the well-being of mankind as a whole," which "ought to be the objective of the Samaj".⁸ We shall consider these objectives and their attainments in the following section.

The Arya Samaj has adopted a standard form of religious service which each centre maintains if possible. Each service follows the pattern which begins with invocation and followed by Sandhya, Havan, a sermon and Shanti Paat. Services focus on the act of worship and the principles Swami Dayananda sought to inculcate into the minds of his followers. Dedication to the work of the founding fathers is emphasized. Ethical discipline is stressed and includes Tapas (austerity), Satyam (truth), Shāntam (peace). Truth is, however, considered the Supreme Virtue.⁹

The virtues emphasized in every Arya Samaj service form the basis of religious belief which enables the congregation to conceptualise the paramount importance of religious integration. The havan ceremony accompanied by sermonic dialogue becomes the heart of religious practice. The writer discovered that in most services members of the congregation pay little attention

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to the details concerning Vedic eschatology or soteriology. However much Swami Dayananda's interpretation may be distinctive thus providing the basis for the features that distinguish Arya Samaj theology, members are content to participate in worship for the religious satisfaction that emanates from every act of worship. The manner in which worship is undertaken is a unique form of systematization of worship which emanates largely from Swami Dayananda's work as innovator of religious reintegration. Thus the sacred objects such as havan give symbolic representation to worship with the emphasis on sacred virtues as a point of convergence between the act of worship and religious conceptualisation.

Our study of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and Arya Samaj as a broader classification brings into focus the sect-cult type of religious institution. It holds to the ideals of perfection based upon love and service and a lasting fellowship among its members. It reveals the characteristics of a sect in emphasizing the ideal of perfection and religious growth, and that of a cult in its willingness to allow Samajic ideas to be widely distributed. The goal for the Arya Samaj therefore does not lie in bringing salvation to the individual within the framework of a movement such as the Sabha but allows its universal principles to infiltrate into the wider spectrum of religious developments for Hinduism and if possible beyond it.

Loomis¹⁰ says that religious action through the use of sacred objects offers a concrete reference for the values emphasized within the system. This accentuates a sense of belonging and contributes greatly to the enhancement of religious commitment.

In so doing the Pandits conducting the service share in the integrative function of worship. Each time worship serves the function of renewal of faith while religious symbols serve the task of reaffirming the integrative role of worship. In this way faith is maintained, if not restored, as may sometimes be necessary. The personality of Dayananda and, above all, his suffering serve as the motivating force for greater commitment. The life of Swami Dayananda serves an integrative role

symbolising the underlying faith necessary for religious reinforcement. Ritual then becomes a way of producing religious service. This ideal is never in want of teaching by example because many other aspects of the work of the Arya Samaj remind the congregation of the binding wholeness of religious solidarity found within the movement in its widest areas of service.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

SAMAJIC INFLUENCE ON SOUTH AFRICAN HINDUISM

The institutions affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha bear the weight of the work the Sabha has undertaken in the name of religious endeavour. Arya Samajists emphasize how much they are a part of a wider community so they direct their energies at influencing the community as a whole in every aspect of Hindu religious practice. Taking its cue from a view expressed by the leadership in India, members of the Samaj set about their tasks in numerous ways.¹¹

The Veda Niketan through its numerous publications has been able to spread the message of Hinduism to every part of South Africa. A publication entitled "The Fundamental Teachings of Hinduism" has been sent to every part of the country and countries abroad, thus enabling the Samaj to influence Hindu thinking in probably the most positive way possible. A feature of this work is that although it does express many ideas that the Arya Samaj considers important it nevertheless stresses also the essentials of Hinduism of relevance to the South African Hindu community. In this respect many Hindus in South Africa thus became familiar with more tangible concepts of an ethical system having direct relevance to the South African situation.

For example, Swami Dayananda's ethical system is underlined by his belief in Dharma as the practice of equitable justice together with that of truthfulness in thought, word and deed. He emphasizes, however, that ethical disciplines have to conform with Divine Will as embodied in the Vedas. Only righteously acquired wealth constitutes artha, while all other forms of wealth constitute anartha. The enjoyment of legitimate desires with the help of honestly acquired wealth constitutes kāma. While the concepts are understood among Hindus generally,

Dayananda's emphases and more particularly the Arya Samajic presentation of them to Hindus in South Africa helps to reformulate religious growth in the community. Consider Dayananda's views concerning marriage and the Samaj's attempt to reformulate the traditional conceptions of it for the benefit of members of the Hindu community. Marriage he regards as the union of a man and woman through mutual consent in accordance with the laws laid down by the Vedas. Niyoga, in accordance with ancient practice, is a temporary union for the raising of children. The part the Arya Samaj has been able to play in the lives of many Hindus in South Africa in this regard is significant because it was called to unite families from different linguistic backgrounds. Where a member of the Hindu community marries a member of another language group, an Arya Samaj wedding helps to circumvent numerous problems arising from the specific customary rituals necessary for either party. Since the formation of the Vedic Purohit Mandal and the building of the Vedic Temple, however, numerous changes have been instituted in the way Hindu weddings are performed for the entire Hindu community. The emphasis placed upon simplicity of belief and ritualistic practice has modified approaches to ritualism within the Hindu community to the extent that a considerable proportion of Hindi and many non-Hindi speaking people now appreciate its value.

Its ritualistic scheme is now seen as an innovation of considerable importance and consequence for the community as a whole which is increasingly being appreciated. This influence is also spreading due to the growth in the number of priests the organisation now has. In this way, it is able to emphasize its views concerning the performance of Samskaras, rites which contribute to the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of man. Samskaras have to be performed as obligatory, ritualistic duty.¹² The most significant contribution to this branch of religious practice by the Arya Samaj, however, lies in its view that no ritual need be performed for the departed after cremation. This is a matter of considerable discussion among Hindus and while the controversy rages, the Arya Samaj viewpoint on the matter gains ground increasingly.

The Arya Samaj has been able to contribute one ritual practice that is growing in popularity and importance among Hindu communities throughout the country. The Agnihotra or havan ceremony is being performed increasingly with greater numbers of people becoming interested in it as a medium for religious expression. Its importance lies in its implication as an act of purification in which God is invoked through fire - one of the primordial elements. Apart from personal purification as an act of worship, it purifies the air, the vegetables and plants and directly promotes the well-being of all sentient creatures. The performance of Yajna (sacrifice) and the resort to Tirthas (sacred places) are, however, lifted from the realm of rituals to that of the moral ideal. Yajna for the Arya Samajists consists of showing due respect to the wise and the learned, for in its performance lies the invocation and also the supplication as well as the intercession for and on behalf of all fellow beings, the earth, the interspace, the animals, the plants and all the living beings of the world. This is followed by an intercession of spiritual growth resulting from a study of scripture, science, the arts and all other knowledge. Thirthas, the means by which the ocean of misery is crossed, consists in the practice of truthfulness in speech, in the acquisition of true knowledge, in the cultivation of the habits of associating with the wise and performing deeds that are commendable.

The institution of religious examinations by the Veda Niketan has enabled it to become responsible for hundreds of students becoming familiar with the essentials of Hinduism in a way no other Hindu organisation has so far been able to emulate. Students in many parts of the country now participate in the annual examinations which result in scores of students throughout South Africa becoming increasingly aware of the strong influence the work of the Arya Samaj movement now has on Hinduism in this country.

Although the work of the Aryan Benevolent Home does not feature as religious work its religious connotations strongly suggest support for the karma yoga discipline. This also means that people associate the philanthropic work of the home with the

essential religious calling of the Arya Samaj and in this way the Samaj's message spreads and becomes increasingly well known among ever widening groups of people in the whole country.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha's establishment of Hindi schools is recognised as an act of service to young people who during youth camps and other outings come to understand what Arya Samaj principles are and eventually find themselves adapting to a new form of Hinduism free of many ritualistic practices and above all free to caste prejudices. In this respect the Arya Samaj is recognised as an institution of reform that introduced a new religious system which sacrifices nothing of the sublime in Hindu ethical or theological doctrine. Its Vedic temple still symbolises the best in religious endeavour which keeps Hinduism vibrant in many ways.

Despite the arduous nature of the functions that are carried out by the Sabha in South Africa in the face of exacting social conditions, the charismatic personality of its leader Swami Dayananda appears as one of the chief motivating factors of its development. The example set by him has led many in the organisation to commit themselves to acts of service thus following the lead of what Weber calls "exemplary prophecy" i.e. showing others the road to salvation by personal example of suffering and service and finally teaching of religious truth.

The structural changes initiated by Swami Dayananda in the organisational frame-work of religious institutionalisation has struck a significant cord within the Hindu movement for although it speaks of revitalising Hinduism by eliminating aspects of its familiar codes of social ethics such as the caste system, it nevertheless inculcates new life into it by emphasizing the principles of universal brotherhood. For this reason it is easy to see how the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, emphasizing as it does the fundamental elements of religious practice as conceived by it, will have a considerable lifespan independent of the charismatic personality that was its original inspiration.

The South African situation having given birth to three famous religious institutions in the years following the birth of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha lends itself to religious conceptualisation in a way that does not reject age old patterns of worship however much these may be regarded as neither useful nor necessary in the long term. But the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (following a useful line of service which is strengthened each time by visits to this country by eminent Samajists) lays claim to the appeal its work has for the vast number of Hindus.

The ten principles the Arya Samaj adopted in India form a focal point of religious commitment by Arya Samajists in South Africa. The need for a foundational basis is clearly recognised by many people outside the Samajic field in South Africa who also see it as the basis for any kind of religious directional influence. Religion for Arya Samajists thus is not an exclusive individual affair. "We are not isolated beings obviously put together by some external agency. We are tied down by natural and inseparable relations and our individual well-being is not all conceivable, much less realisable except through the well being of others."¹² For this reason, it rejects the caste system supported by wider Hinduism and decrees that all Hindus irrespective of caste shall study the Vedas. It begins its scheme of work by emphasizing the necessity for worship to be conducted systematically and methodically and also contends that all worship shall be arranged in accordance with a fundamental set of principles. Since the inception of the Sabha many Hindu organisations are now known to have become influenced into formulating their own systems of worship according to regulated patterns.

The Sabha in emphasizing its desire to uphold Arya Samaj principles rejects such doctrines as the doctrine of the Avatqr. It vehemently condemns idolatry and also condemns the practice of animal sacrifice or even offering food at the altar to God. It also takes a strong view of the ancient custom of ancestor worship as it does too the idea that pilgrimage to any holy shrine has any spiritual value.

It is significant that these practices form an important point of attention among Arya Samajists because the attempt at reform is aimed directly at practices the Samaj regards as having no religious nor cultural meaningfulness. This attempt therefore to proselytise its message on these matters meets with some resistance, which does not necessarily arise through direct opposition but rather fear of parting from old and time honoured practices. The message of the Arya Samaj travels a long and difficult road, meeting with orthodoxy and nebulousness among older people while younger ones receive it sympathetically if not at times with open enthusiasm.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha labours under difficulties it shares with religious movements world-wide both within and outside the fold of Hinduism. It functions through clearly defined motives, and aims at achieving goals of far reaching consequence for the Hindu community nationally. The nature of its work and philosophy encourages an inherent dynamism that does occasionally slacken under the strains of economic, social and political pressures. However, numerous affiliated institutions which support the many faceted attack on religious conservatism and short-sighted orthodoxy sustain its steady growth. As an institution of service it stands to gain if it vigorously searches out and develops the ideas that enhance its contribution to the growth and development of the community as a whole. Its message is quite clearly being appreciated in widening areas of community life not only as means for personal salvation but also as a gift of service of lasting religious enhancement and involvement.

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GLOSSARY

Acharya	: A religious teacher
Agnihotra	: Fire ceremony involving the offering of oblations
Aryavarta	: Another name for India
Bhil	: A mountain tribesman
Brahmacharya	: A student
Brahman	: The Impersonal, formless Supreme Being
Brahmin	: A member of the priestly community
Devatas	: deities
Dharma	: Religious law
Grahasta-ashrama	: Householders station in life
Gurukul	: A school, the guru's place for study
Harijan	: Child of God; a member of a scheduled caste
Kanthi	: A stringed neckband
Kshatriya	: A warrior; a member of the military community
Paatshala	: A school
Parabrahman	: The omnipotent Brahman
Parivrajaka	: Wandering monk
Puja	: Worship
Sanathana Dharma	: The Eternal Faith
Sanathani	: A follower of Sanathana Dharma
Sandhya	: Twilight prayers
Sanskar	: Holy sacrament
Satyam	: Truth
Shaligram	: A stone image; an idol
Shantam	: Peace
Shastrarth	: A discussion on holy scripture
Shilpavidya	: The science and technology of architecture
Shivalaya	: Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva
Shuddhi	: A purification ceremony
Snatak	: A graduate of a school

Sudra	: A member of the labouring caste
Swadesh	: Goods manufactured locally
Swaraj	: Home rule; independence
Tapas	: Austerities
Tilak	: A mark on the forehead
Upasana	: Prayer or meditation
Vaishya	: A member of the business caste
Vanmargism	: The belief in living as a forest dweller
Vedalankar	: A student of religion
Vidyalankar	: A student in human science
Vidyarthi	: A student
Yajnopavit	: Sacred thread worn by Brahmin and the twice born

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