



Swami Dayananda Saraswati
*Vedic Scholar, Spiritualist, Reformer
and Hindu Protagonist*

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Swami Dayanand Saraswati

Vedic scholar, spiritualist, reformer & Hindu protagonist!

Reaching out to last man standing, fighting social injustice to resurrecting primacy of vedas was his life mission

Hindus and Bharat are celebrating Swami Dayanand Saraswati's 200th birth anniversary. He's a renowned vedic scholar, social reformer & founder of Arya Samaj.

He dedicated his life to reviving purity of Vedic teachings and challenging social injustices. Dayanand Saraswati was born as Mool Shankar on February 12, 1824 in Tankara, Gujarat to Karshanji Lalji Tiwari and Yashodabai in wealthy and significant Brahmin family.

A staunch devotee of Lord Shiva, the young Dayanand Saraswati would stay up all night on Shivratri for prayers. Given his family's strong beliefs in Hindu faith, Mool Shankar as he was initially known, learnt immense value of fasting, piety, and traditions in his formative years itself.

At the age of eight, Mool Shankar was initiated into Brahmanic universe through the (Upanayana Sanskar) Yajnopavita Sanskar, also known as the investiture of the "twice-born". He would honestly practice these customs.

Later on, Dayanand Saraswati was the first to give the call for Swaraj as "India for Indians" in 1876 from misrule and occupation of tyrants. It was this call later taken up by Lokmanya Tilak in his fight against British imperialists. He was given the epithet of Maharishi and is considered as one of the Makers of Modern India.

Young Seeker to Vedic Reformer

Mool Shankar's life took a spiritual turn after death of his sister & uncle in 1846 from cholera. Dayanand began to wonder about the meaning of life and death. His parents became concerned when he

started to ask questions. In his early teens, he was betrothed, but in 1846, he decided marriage was not for him and fled his family. Questioning life's mysteries, he embarked on twenty years odyssey, seeking answers from yogis and scriptures. Finally, encountering Swami Virajananda ignited his passion for the Vedas. Rechristened Dayanand, he vowed to spread their knowledge and combat misinterpretations.

Dayanand's Spiritual Compass:

Dayanand promoted Hinduism based on the genuine meaning of Vedas. In place of idolatry, superstitions and caste prejudice, he placed strong emphasis on dharma or universal righteousness and truth. Many people identified with his self-reliance campaign and questioned of established practices.

Arya Samaj (Sanskrit: “Society of Nobles”): A Beacon of Reform:

In 1875, as first step towards reforming Hinduism to modernity, Dayanand established Arya Samaj, a society dedicated to "making this world noble. Arya Samaj aim was to re-establish primacy of Vedas, the earliest Hindu scriptures and its ten guiding principles focused on self-improvement, knowledge and social good. The Samaj actively condemned harmful practices and emphasized education for both men and women.

“The ten tenets of the Arya Samaj¹

1. God is the efficient cause of all true knowledge and all that is known through knowledge.
2. God is existent, intelligent and blissful. He is formless, omniscient, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchangeable, beginning-less, unequalled, the support of all, the master of all, omnipresent, immanent, un-aging, immortal, fearless, eternal

¹ <http://davlakhisarai.com/E9D88F7B-1299-49FF-AB4C-37C601BF71D7/CMS/Page/Arya-Samaj#:~:text=He%20is%20formless%2C%20omniscient%2C%20just,and%20the%20maker%20of%20all.>

and holy and the maker of all. He alone is worthy of being worshiped.

3. Vedas are the scriptures of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas (read Hindus) to read them, teach them, recite them and to hear them being read.

4. One should always be ready to accept truth and to renounce untruth.

5. All acts should be performed in accordance with Dharma that is, after deliberating what is right and wrong.

6. Prime object of Arya Samaj is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of everyone.

7. Our conduct towards all should be guided by love, righteousness and justice.

8. We should dispel Avidya (ignorance) and promote Vidya (knowledge).

9. No one should be content with promoting his / her good only. On the contrary, one should look for his / her good in promoting the good of all.

10. One should regard oneself under restriction to follow the rules of society calculated to promote the wellbeing of all, while in following the rules of individual welfare all should be free.

Shuddhi Movement & Education

Dayanand brought back those who had converted to other religions by starting Shuddhi movement. He was also aware of the role that education plays in societal change. His followers founded DAV schools and several Gurukuls which are still in operation today and provide high-quality education.

A Trailblazer's Legacy:

Dayanand encountered opposition, yet his life and teachings made a lasting impression. He served as an inspiration to liberation warriors such as Bhagat Singh and Savarkar and Arya Samaj is still fighting for social justice and spiritual advancement around the world. Dayanand asserted, "Hinduism is a religion of knowledge and wisdom, not blind faith."

This legacy endures because it serves as a constant reminder of the importance of pursuing the truth, opposing unfair systems, and devoting oneself to the creation of a just and equal world.

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