

CHAPTER - III

THE ARYA SAMAJ AS A MOVEMENT

Every religious movement aims at not only initiating a spiritual awakening, but also reforming the contemporary society by trying to remove ignorance, superstitions, doubts and dogmas from the minds of people, thus ushering in a new kind of religious renaissance. In this respect, the Arya Samaj, as a religious movement, did not fall far behind, as it made a dynamic impact upon the Indians, forming an interesting and conspicuous chapter in the modern Hindu thought. Through the preaching of Vedic ideals, it succeeded to a great extent, in reforming the then Indian society, inculcating in the people the moral values of life. In this chapter, we shall attempt to throw light on how the Arya Samaj as a movement was able to achieve its desired goal of revitalizing the Indians from their stupor of lethargy and ignorance, initiating them to learn the invaluable greatness of the Vedic ideals and making them understand and accept these ideals as a way of life. To be precise, the Arya Samaj tried its best to remove the social ills such as untouchability, cow-slaughter, forced widowhood, child-marriage and bringing about reforms through female education, permission for going abroad for higher learning, reconversion to Hinduism, and many other philanthropic work to inject a new

life and vigour into the then morbid socio-religious environment of the Indian society.

The major thrust of the movement was in the field of religion. The religious scene among the Hindus in the nineteenth century had become morbid. Many religious beliefs and practices prevailed among the Hindu society which were not an essential and inseparable part of true Hinduism. The puranic Hinduism had practically usurped the rightful place of the Vedas and the Upanishads.¹ Hinduism had evolved many sects like Saivism, Vaisnavism, Saktism, Tantrism, the Swaminarayan and others. Religion degenerated into the performance of religious worship of idol and rigid rituals and its spiritualism began to be clouded and confused. Religion began to be equated with temple-going, the observance of shradha ceremony, pilgrimage to holy places, observance of vratas and fasts in expectation of fantastic earthly rewards, and beliefs in astrology.²

They did not know much about their holy books. They believed that anything written in Sanskrit was sacred. They often read books in Sanskrit which were not really good, only a few of them read the Gita which was supposed to be composed by Lord Krishna : some read the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the two great epics of India ; but very few of them knew anything about the four Vedas, the sacred books of the Hindus.³ As a matter of fact the so-called religious leaders of Hinduism, the members of the priestly order, supported by the pandits of Banares, were interested in keeping the established order of things unchanged, as it brought them pecuniary gains

and rewards in the form of charity and religious fees. Apart from the internal disease in the form of priestly domination, there were the Christian missionaries, who with the tacit backing of European officials, were reaping a rich harvest by the religious conversion of the lower classes of Hindus.⁴

In the religious sphere, the Arya Samaj has vigorously campaigned for the freedom of thought. Earlier all the words uttered by a holy person were regarded as authoritative. None dared to criticise the interpolated Sanskrit verses and non-Vedic teachings of the orthodox schools. It was the Arya Samaj that revolutionised the religious thought and ideas of the people. The Arya Samaj taught the people to think rationally. They were asked to determine the value of a precept in terms of the degree of truth it contained. They were urged to use their intellect and to reason out things for themselves before accepting them. The scientific truths and the laws that govern nature were given their rightful place in religion.⁵ Dayananda was inspired by his Vedic knowledge and his deep study of the *shastras* to reform Hinduism and make it free from all vices. He was of the opinion that in order to appreciate religious truth in its proper perspective, one should be absolutely free from prejudices and superstitions. He was of the view that human beings had the capacity to follow the path of truth which was the essence of religion, but were prevented from so doing by selfishness, ego, greed and avarice. "Equitable dealings, the acceptance of truth and the rejection of untruth, under all circumstances, constitute the true conduct of the life or religion, and the reverse of this is irreligion."⁶

Swami Dayananda Saraswati gave a new conception of Hinduism ; a Hinduism shorn of its weakness, and interpreted as a vigorous cultural movement. He did not claim that he was laying the foundation of a new religion. It was his conviction that the Hinduism of the Vedic period, if we can call it by that name, was a model on which the present-day Hinduism could be built up. The picture which he painted of the ancient Aryans, the ancestors of the present-day Hindus, was an inspiring one, and it roused in the people a new sense of pride in themselves. The ancient Aryans, according to Dayananda, were a race of mainly men and great women. Amongst them were found great warriors, and great thinkers and sages. The epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata bring before us a procession of mighty heroes and heroines of ancient days.⁷

The Arya Samaj is not a new religion. It preaches the doctrines of the Vedas revealed to mankind by God in the beginning of the universe. It attempts at rehabilitating and reviving the Vedic truths which mankind had forgotten through ignorance and the advent of puranic literature, which blurred our vision and sent the Vedic culture into the background. The Arya Samaj has dug out the Vedas down from the debris of the puranas, and installed them on the high pedestal of morality and infallibility they deserve.

The Arya Samaj teaches the unity and oneness of God, the brotherhood of God: the conception of the God head- given in the Vedas is the loftiest. It is this conception which the Arya Samaj has put forth before the world. It does not believe in idol-worship, reincarnation of God, shradhas, satisfaction

of the departed souls by offerings in their name. It believes in the transmigration of souls and the beginningless and endlessness of God, soul and matter. It believes in the return of the soul in the form of Mukti, a state of beatitude and immense happiness for a long period.⁸ There is no place in the Arya Samaj for the hereditary priest or for an ecclesiastical authority over the people. It does not accept the innumerable rituals and ceremonies which choke the spirit and make religion a mockery.⁹

They interpreted the Vedas to justify the puranic mythology and thus they tried to give the present degenerate popular Hindu religion a Vedic sanction. The western scholars accepted these commentaries as authoritative and so their interpretation of the Vedas was also influenced by the writings of Sayana and Mahidhar and others of this school. Dayananda tried to interpret the Vedas on the basis of original texts without being influenced by the works of the commentators of the later age.¹⁰ In the book *Satyarth Prakash* Swami Dayananda tries to establish the thesis that the Vedic religion was absolutely monotheistic in nature. In the Vedas there are hymns which assert the unity of God. But many conclude that the Vedic religion was polytheistic in character. Max Muller considered henotheism as the most appropriate term to explain the Vedic religion. By polytheism, he pointed out, we understood an organized system of Gods, each occupying different positions and ranks in the hierarchy, under the authority of one supreme God either a Zeus or a Jupiter.

Under the Vedic system he found no such hierarchy of position among the Gods, and the reformer Max Muller preferred the term henotheism to

explain the Vedic religious system. Swami Dayananda could not agree with these views. He contented that the Vedas refer to only supreme God though. He has large number of names. As the attributes of God are innumerable so also the names given to Him. The terms like Agni, Vayu, Surya, which occur in the Vedas do not according to Dayananda, refer to different gods ; they are different attributes of the same Almighty.¹¹ In the words of Aravindo Ghosh “Even when the Vedas were no longer understood, even when their traditions were lost behind puranic forms, they were still held in honour, though without knowledge , as authoritative revelation and inspired book of knowledge, the source of all sanctions and standard of all truth”.¹² Dayananda, therefore, decided to take his stand on the rock of the Vedas and to teach the Hindu what the Vedas contained.

In the words of Benjamin Walker , “Whereas Rammohan Roy had been attracted by the Upanishads and Vivekananda by the Vedanta, Dayananda went straight to the source of both these systems, the Vedas. He regarded the Vedas as the eternal, infallible, perfect and complete revelation of God, given to the world one hundred billion years ago.”¹³ Rishi Aurobindo accepts that, “There is then nothing fantastic in Dayananda’s idea that Veda contains truth of science as well as truth of religion.”¹⁴ Lastly Rishi Aurobindo Says:

Dayananda will be honored as the first who discovered the right clues, amidst the chaos and obscurity of ignorance and age-long misunderstanding His was the eye of direct vision that pierced to the truth and fastened

on that which was essential. He found the keys of the doors that time had closed and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned fountains.¹⁵

The impetus behind the revival of this Vaidika Dharma (Vedic Religion) was the personality of Swami Virajananda of Mathura, the Guru of Swami Dayananda, who aspired to see the past glory of India reoriented and the lot of the fallen Indian nation improved, which in his view, could only be accomplished through the renaissance of Vedic culture and with this aspiration in his heart, he demanded of Dayananda its propagation according to Arsha tradition and Anarsha, even at the cost of his life, which Dayananda gladly accepted and faithfully adhered to till his martyrdom.

His lion-like roaring voice 'back to the Vedas' appealed highly to the contemporary Indian sensibility groping since long in the dark. It was the origin of this Arya Dharma advancing with the motto :-

We are 'Aryans' and our religion is 'Veda' 'Om' is our God and 'Truth' the duty. We would establish the 'Arya Samaja's' i.e. the societies of the noble men, throughout the world and teach all and sundry to practise all the true principles of course, having practised them first ourselves.¹⁶

The Arya Samaj is not a religious sect as it does not believe in the human representation of God in the form of a prophet, mediator or saviour or

Avatar (incarnation). Every man is directly connected with the Supreme Being and the worship of God means the holding of direct spiritual communion with Him. Its conception of God is peculiarly its own. The second principle gives a broad outline of the Arya Samajic theism. God is all-pervading intelligent and perfect as the comprehensive principle of the universe. God is formless free from all bodily shackles: hence you can have no picture, idol or image of Him.¹⁷

Thus the Arya Samaj is deadly against all kinds of fetish-worship, idolatory, image-worship, tree-worship, river-worship, mountain-worship, star-worship, cow-worship, bird-worship or even man-worship. The worshiper's heart is the real temple of God, and meditation on the attributes of God is the true worship. As God is perfect, it is changeless ; as change always means proceeding from imperfection to perfection. And as God does not change, He can not incarnate. Thus Rama, Krishna, Christ and other great personage were men and not God, and though remembered reverentially for the part they played in the advancement of their fellow-being, they should never be worshipped as God or representatives of God.¹⁷ Swami Dayananda has prescribed a simple mode of worship called *prarthana* or prayer consisting of eight Veda mantras and *sandhya* or worship which consists of the recitation of some Vedic mantras which speak of the attributes of God and seeking His blessings for the success of one's efforts. It included yogic pranayam, that is the breath exercise. All this does not take more than 15 to 20 minutes, a day.¹⁸

All the awakening that we find among the Hindus today, is the result, direct or indirect of Swami Dayananda's teachings. The Arya Samaj has purged Hinduism of its inconsistencies, excesses and superfluities, it has released Hinduism of undesirable fetters, it has rejuvenated Hinduism. In short it has made a dead religion alive. If the Hindus correctly interpret the Arya Samaj and in fact most Hindus do then the day is not far when Hinduism and Arya Samaj will merge together and Swami Dayananda will be acknowledged as the great saviour not of Hindus only, but of the whole world.¹⁹

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Arya Samaj movement was perhaps the most powerful of socio-revival movements, which gave a new, more dynamic and concrete dimension to the social and religious regeneration movement in the country. The Arya Samaj has had a greater dynamic impact on Indians over several generations than any other religious or social reform movement has in modern times. It is the most conspicuous movement of the times and one of the most important and interesting chapters of modern Hindu thought. Not only did it want to bring about the spiritual regeneration of India by purifying Hindu religion and Indian society, but also it tried to reestablish the pristine glory of the Vedas and the Vedic religion. It was a crusade against socio-religious superstitions and prejudices like idolatry, child-marriage, ritualism, priesthood, polytheism, casteism etc, it upheld supremacy and the infallibility of the Vedas and the Vedic knowledge. It was a part of the nineteenth century renaissance movement, that believed in Hindu

revivalism and back to the Vedas was its call to the people. It sowed the seeds of pseudo-militant nationalism in India. The Arya Samaj started as a universal pledge for revolutionary, religious and social reforms, propagation of lofty Vedic ideals in regard to individual and social conduct, and lastly collective activity for the good of the human race.

The groundless social ills in the nineteenth century had sapped the vitality and vigour of the Hindu society. The society was fast degenerating and the signs of decay were coming to the surface. A number of social thoughts and practices were operating as serious obstacles to the growth and development of the nation's economy and traditions; to the state of ridicule and scorn of the western educated men and women.²⁰

Some of these social evils were : untouchability, child-marriage, enforced widowhood, the denial of equality to women in religions and education, the ban on crossing the seas, the forced extravagance on marriage and death events, the compulsory use of fireworks in the public, the dowry system, the barter system in girls-marriage and several such other social ills, the Hindu society of the period suffered. These evil customs were regarded as ordained by God and, therefore, they were an inseparable essential part of Hinduism.²¹

The Arya Samaj struggled hard to cure the society of this malady and make it socially healthy and culturally strong. Its contribution in the social field was so singular and distinct that even if it had done nothing else, it would still have a place of a pioneer in the social reformation movement of this

period.²² It aimed at establishing a universal religion and purifying the Indian society of its social evils. Lala Lajpat Rai says “The social ideals of the Arya Samaj are the ideals of the ancient Rishis of India. They are based on :-

(1) The father of God and the brotherhood of men.

(2) The equality of the sexes.

(3) Absolute justice and fair play between men and men and nations and nations. Equal opportunities to all according to their nature, Karma and merit.

(4) Love and charity towards all.²³

Speaking of its founder. Swami Dayananda, Suraj Bhan said, “ For fully twenty years he tried to purify Hindu society of all the dust and rust that had gathered about it during many thousand years.²⁴ Dayananda as a social reformer fearlessly attacked the prevalent evils of contemporary society—idol-worship, untouchability. These evils could not be evaded by a dip in the Ganges.²⁵ Thus Dayananda Saraswati was, the last Hindu social epoch maker in the true line of the Buddha and Shankar. The Arya Samaj seeks to build up a socialistic pattern of society in which the material and spiritual interests of the individual are sufficiently safeguarded based on the glorious teaching of the Veda.²⁶

The stigma that had darkened the name of the Hindu was the practice of untouchability, which was an off-shoot of the pernicious caste system.²⁷ Dayananda had the farsighted vision to see that the caste is the greater curse

on India. Based on a wrong interpretation of the well-known purusha-sukta, it had been working for the disruption of the Hindu Society. It pained him to see that this single institution, more than any thing else had been retarding the development of India into a nation. The distinction of high-caste and low-caste had relegated millions of India's sons and daughters to the position of he lots whose very existence was considered pollution. It was no wonder that so many of them had turned away from the faith of their forefathers, just for the privilege of being treated as human beings.²⁸ Speaking on the caste-ridden Hindu society Ram Gopal remarks :

The horrible caste-system, and look at its blighting effects on life and intellect. It had made all the members of caste utterly helpless puppets, like so many sheep blindly following the example of the flock, with its thousand interdicts about food and drink, about sanctity and pollution, about social inter-mingling, and social intercourse. A member of one caste, however friendly, must not eat or drink with one of the another caste on pain of excommunication.²⁹

Dayananda first sought to exorcise the obnoxious spell of untouchability. He vehemently opposed the practice of untouchability and worked for the upliftment of the oppressed and the so-called low castes of the society. Dayananda quoted the Vedas to prove that the varna of a person was determined by his character, good deeds and his sanskar. Truthfulness, self-

sacrifice, knowledge of God and the Vedas can enable a sudra to enter into the higher varna. Similarly, due to bad conduct, evil deeds, selfishness and untruthfulness, a person belonging to the higher varna, may be degraded to a lower one in the social hierarchy.³⁰ A person may be born of Brahmin parents, but he may become a sudra if he acts like one.

Swami Dayananda preached the equality of mankind. He did not believe in any distinctions between the high and the low, the high-caste Hindus and the untouchables. He taught the people to love one another and root out all thoughts of hate from the heart. Love was the highest religion. One could win over enemies by love. But love should not be confined only to human beings ; even animals should be loved. It was very cruel to inflict any kind of pain on them.³¹ The system of untouchability as existed in the Hindu society was bitterly denounced by him and Mahatma Gandhi appreciating the outlook of Dayananda observed that among the many rich legacies that Swami Dayananda had left to the Indians, his unequivocal pronouncement against untouchability was undoubtedly the most prominent.

In the institutions established by Dayananda in his life time and by the Arya Samaj after his death all people can get admittance irrespective of the fact that they are Brahmans or Sudras.³² The Arya Samaj by its constant working of for the last six or seven decades had ploughed the field well for the activities of to be taken up by. Gandhi later on.³³

The temples of the Arya Samaj are ever open to all the depressed classes.³⁴ Many missionaries sacrificed their lives to secure equal social and

religious status for the so called untouchables. They were not only declared for the first time eligible to study Sanskrit and the Vedas, but many of them became the preachers and teachers of Vedas in the Arya Samaj. In many Arya Samaj temples there were priests who were born in the so called untouchables castes. They now perform sacramental rituals such as marriage, sacred thread ceremonial havans and other rituals, which were formerly performed exclusively by Brahmans.³⁵

There are on record some bright exceptions in which inter-caste marriages were celebrated; but the majority of the Arya Samajists have not been able to rise above caste restrictions at the time of the marriage of their boys and girls. The caste system is so strongly entrenched that it will take a lot of efforts and patience before it gives way altogether. But it does not absolve any right-thinking person from doing his best to eradicate untouchability. Inter-dinning among the different castes is common amongst the followers of the Arya Samaj. One very great reform effected by Swami Dayananda was to throw open the priestly functions to people of the all castes.³⁶

The services of Mahatma Hans Raj, Swami Shradhanand, Pandit Rambhaj Dutta, Lala Ganga Ram of Sialkot, and principal Ram Das of Hoshiarpur, are too well known to be repeated. The Samaj has spent lakhs of rupees on educating and uplifting the untouchables, has established dozens of schools purely for the education of the Harijans and is giving annual stipends to the Harijan boys who are getting free education in Samaj schools, to whom

books are supplied free in many cases. Their social disabilities have been removed to some extent. The condition of the Harijans in the Punjab is better than that of those in other provinces ; and credit for this goes to the Arya Samaj.³⁷

Thus the Arya Samaj stands conspicuous among all societies that aim at the renovation of the Hindus. It has declared a crusade against all superstitions and all evil customs. Taking for its model ancient India rather than to unaided reason, to the great rishis of the past rather than to foreign scholars, it has spread its influence far and wide. Its light has penetrated the innermost depths of the Hindu society.³⁸ The Arya Samaj took up the cudgels for the people of the Hindu society, who were the victims of the then prevalent social ills such as of child marriage and old marriage resulting in increased number of young widows, women who were ignorant of the world around them and they had turned widows at a tender age. The young widow's life was intolerable in the Hindu society.³⁹ She was held responsible for all the misfortunes of the family and was treated worse than a servant. Generally she was not allowed to marry again, and sometimes she was forced to burn herself to death with her husband.⁴⁰ Swami Dayananda began his tirade in favour of widow-remarriage and favoured the institution of 'Niyoga' (appointment), as Niyoga was in vogue in ancient times.⁴¹ In 1856, pt. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's praise-worthy advocacy was successful in getting the Widow-Remarriage Act passed. But it was rotting in the shelves of lawyers as public prejudices were too strong to drive benefits from the law. The Arya Samaj

took the masses and succeeded in popularizing widow-remarriage.⁴² In bringing about reforms to the life of these young widows Sir Gangaram Trust has done a notable work. The Trust has opened many "Vidhwa Ashrams" [center where widows are cared for] in the northern parts of India. Thousands of widows for whom life was truly a living hell were able to lead purposeful and happy lives under the roofs of these Ashrams. Today, of course, marriage of widows has become an acceptable fact in the Hindu Society. In this context, Valentine Chirol has aptly remarked.

The influence has been constantly exerted to check the marriages between mere boys and almost infant girls which have done so much physical as well as moral mischief to the Hindu Society and also to improve the wretched lot of Hindu widows whose widow-hood with all that entails of menial degradation often begins before they have ever really been wives.⁴³

Another evil was the child-marriage and the Arya Samaj did not lag behind in its attempt to remove this social evil. Child-marriage was introduced into Hindu Society when hordes of invaders began to pour into India at about the beginning of the Christian era, and the honour and chastity of women became unsafe.⁴⁴ The Arya Samaj carried on a vehement crusade against this institution, and may be congratulated on the success it has met with in rallying public opinion in favour of its view.⁴⁵ As regards the age of marriage, Swami Dayananda says in the 4th chapter of the Satya Prakash. "The best time of

for the marriage of girls is from sixteen to twenty-four years of age. The lowest age for a girl for marriage is sixteen and for a man twenty-five.⁴⁶ He was aware of the evil of after impacts of child marriage, hence he suggested that there should be legislation to stop this evil practice.⁴⁷ Social legislations sponsored by the Arya Samajists were passed as Acts in the central legislature.⁴⁸ The Child Marriage Act known designed by prominent Arya Samajist were milestones on the road of progress of the Indian Society.⁴⁹

In the nineteenth century, among the orthodox Hindu, there was a strong prejudice against the education of girls. They thought they should not be sent to school, as they believed that if women learnt to read and write they would come to grief and as a result they were married illiterate.⁵⁰ The old saying was accepted *Stri-Shudras-nadhiyetam* which meant women and low castes (shudras) should never be taught. The custom of child-marriage erected further barrier to the education of girls.⁵¹ Swami Dayananda and his followers were compelled to wage a war against orthodoxy on the point of female education. Swami Dayananda pleaded for equality of men and women and laid much emphasis on the education of women. He argued that an uneducated wife will be a liability to her husband and will also fail to discharge the real duties of a mother. He condemned the economic and social injustice and disability to which women were subjected.⁵² Fifty years ago, all female education was under the direct management of the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj educational institutions were the first to open special and separate institutions for girls, where they were taught Sanskrit and Vedas, for which

they were not eligible according to the orthodox Hindus. Besides learning Sanskrit and Vedas, girls were declared entitled to wear the sacred thread like the boys.⁵³ Now female education has become so common that the people of this generation can't even imagine what formidable opposition the Arya Samaj had to encounter even for such a simple thing, as it now appears.⁵⁴

Then also an unhealthy system was in full force which forbade a woman to expose her face to the view of males. As a result her face, was kept practically covered both indoors and outdoors during the day.⁵⁵ Once Chandi Prasad at Saharnpur said to Swamiji that Indians keep their women folk in purdha, but they go astray. The Christians do not keep their women in veil and take them out for walking freely. Indian women, though wrapped in veil, are more likely to lose their chastity than Christian women. Why does it so happen. Swamiji replied that Purdah was not an ancient custom in India. It came into vogue during the Muslim rule. The Aryans had adopted it in that era of oppression to save their women folk from molestation and degradation, which was the order of the day at that time. But foolish people had come to regard that as a part of their religion. It did not ensure chastity. Right living came from acquisition of knowledge. English women didn't observe purdah and were more intelligent, more courageous, more learned and broad-minded than Indian women : Indian should be educated just as boys were.⁵⁶

There was no purdah in ancient India; men and women moved freely in each other's company. Ancient India had a galaxy of noble women the life of whom it is not easy to find in the pages of the history of other nations. The

names of Sita, Savitri, Draupadi, Damayanti and a host of others will remain immortal for the nobility, heroism and purity of their lives. Hence, the Arya Samaj tried its best to remove the purdah system, following the line of the great ancient Indian tradition.⁵⁷

In the nineteenth century, for some reasons, the orthodox Hinduism had turned its head resolutely against the indulgence of foreign travel by its members. Crossing a sea outside the country was considered to be a veritable sin, the dire consequences for which was the out-casting of such culprits.⁵⁸ This tended to cut off the contact of the Hindus with the outside world which made their thoughts and practices in various fields of life-culture, religion, social, education and politics narrow and stale.⁵⁹

Dayananda's repudiation of the Hindu taboo against foreign travel was also motivated with similar concern for the welfare of the and the prosperity of the country. Rejecting the popular Hindu beliefs that to go abroad is against Hindu religion, he said :

This is all nonsense and propagated by ignorant and foolish people. Formerly people from Aryavarta (India) used to go outside the country for trade, state affairs and even as tourists, Now-a-days the fear of losing caste & religion is wrongly spread. Those who do not hesitate to visit different countries and Islands come in contact with different kinds of people and learn their customs

and ways of living and thus help the progress and better relations of their country. They develop fearlessness and bravery. They adopt whatever is good in other countries and shun what is not good and thus achieve prosperity.⁶⁰

He further adds :

To say that going out of the country results in the loss of character, is to misunderstand religion. It is rightly thought that we should thoroughly understand what the true Vedic religion is, and also learn to refuse false religions so that no one may be able to mislead us. Can a country ever make any progress unless its people trade with or extend their rule over other countries ? What can you expect but misery and poverty, when whilst the foreigners control their trade and rule over them ?⁶¹

Such was an accursed band of people, who were self-centered, in their own interest, this was absurd and did not stand to reason. But the said people insisted on spreading such illusions to see their countrymen did not go abroad. Their feeling was that once they went abroad, they had a chance to gain new experiences and new light and so might not become a prey to their guiles, and consequently would not be ensnared in the net of fraud and hypocrisy spread by them. They would thus lose their livelihood and respect. This was the reason that they made so much fuss.⁶²

Then Swamiji quoted from the epic Mahabharat, chapter 237 slokas 14 and 15, saying that once upon a time the sage Vyasa lived in Patal (America) with his son and pupil Shuka. The son asked his father if spiritual science was only what he had taught him or something more, Vyasa intentionally didn't answer that question. He had lectured on that subject before. So in order to have his teachings confirmed by the testimony of another man, he addressed Shuka thus :

O my son, you go to Mithilapuri and ask this very question to king Janak. He would give you the right answer". 'Suka left America for Mithilapuri. He first visited the continent that lay to the North and North west of the Himalayas and was called Harivansha (now called Europe), then the countries of the Jews called Hoon (Asia Minor), hence he came to China, from China he proceeded towards the Himalayas and thence to Mithilapuri.⁶³

In this context Swamiji refers to the visit of Shri Krishna and Arjuna to America ; they had gone there on an Ashwatari to bring Maharshi Uddalaka for the great fire ritual of Dharmraj Yudhishtir. He narrates how Dhritarashtra, the emperor of India had married the princess of Gandhari, the present day Afghanistan, how Pandu, his brother had married Madri, the princess of Iran and how Arjuna himself had married Uloopi, a princess of some principality in America. The purpose in so doing seems to show that our ancestors in the

past did go abroad establishing contacts with foreigners. During the reign of King Ashoka (250 B.C.) the Hindus visited all parts of the world. But then, the Hindus turned into frogs in a well. European ambassadors attended the courts of king Akbar and Shivaji, but it did not occur to these rulers that the Indians should be sent abroad to learn something from either the English or the French.

The Arya Samaj condemned this ostrich-like attitude of the orthodox Hinduism by pointing out that there was no Vedic sanction for this harmful prohibition and exposed the falsehood of the spurious scriptures which were often cited by the sanatani leaders to validate their stand on the enforced prohibition. Swami Dayananda sent his disciple Shyamji Krishna Varma to England and Germany to study science and other allied subjects.⁶⁴

Another, bold and courageous step undertaken by the Arya Samaj was to initiate the process of reconversion to Hinduism despite the stiff resistance of the orthodox religionists. Vedic religion is meant for all, it is universal in its teachings thus the Arya Samaj opens the door of the Vedic Dharma to all non-Hindus, to-what-so ever religion they may belong. For centuries the Hindus have been the victims of religious fanaticism and proselytization by Muslim and Christian preachers. The Hindus have been reduced to 68% in 1941 from 74% of the population of India in 1881. If this decimation in numbers were to continue the result would be the total extinction of the Hindus.⁶⁵ In the Shuddhi Movement, Maharshi Dayananda introduced one revolutionary item in the programme of the Arya Samaj. He believed that 'lost' Hindus, that is the Hindus converted to other religions, should be brought back within the

process known as the Shuddhi Movement. With Vedic liberalism and rationalism, he believed that the door of Hinduism should not remain closed to those who once had left it for some reason or other.⁶⁶

In the years before world war I Shuddhi campaign was conducted among various untouchable groups in the northwest : On June 23, 1911 at Allhabad, the all India Shuddhi Sabha was founded by Ram Bhaj Dutta. The Arya Samaj had developed Shuddhi as a weapon of defence from the conversion threat posed by both Christianity and Islam. Anxiety over the future of the Hindu community and Aryan ideology merged to produce radical attacks against caste privilege as well as militant efforts of conversion, and reconversion.⁶⁷ It was in the Punjab that Swami Dayananda reconverted some Christians and according to J.F.T. Jordens this was the only area where Dayananda showed an active interest in Shuddhi as a proper and necessary procedure. Although Swami Dayananda did not pursue the idea with great zeal, it was to become a major element in the activities of the Arya Samaj, which he founded, in subsequent years.⁶⁸ There is no doubt that the Shuddhi movement of the Arya Samaj has roused hostilities among narrow minded Islamic or Christian missionaries. But those who love the freedom of thought and worship, realise that Muslim and Christian should not have the exclusive monopoly of proselytisation, and if old orthodox Hindus did not exercise this right, nobody should grudge if the present generation has woken up and demands a fair share for their activities.⁶⁹

Keeping in line with the sentiment of the Hindus, the Arya Samaj also took up the cause of the protection of the cows. 'Goraksha' or protection of

the cow was an integral part of Swami Dayananda's teaching and work. He was the first great man who raised his voice against cow-slaughter. Wherever he went, he vigorously preached against it, not on religious grounds, but for purely utilitarian, humanitarian and economic considerations. For vegetarian people like the Aryans (Hindus), preservation of milch cattle, particularly the cow whose milk forms a principal part of his diet, was a great necessity. He advocated the protection of cow on strictly utilitarian principles. The life of any other animal is as sacred as that of the cow. It is because cow's milk is so essential for the sustenance and the well-being for human life-physically, intellectually, mentally and spiritually- that he so strongly pleaded for cow protection and condemned their slaughter.⁷⁰

He appealed to high British administrative officers wherever he met them, for instance, at Ajmer to Colonel Brooke, the Agent Governor for Rajputna, at Farrukhabad to Mr. Muri Lt. Governor of the N.W.P. (now Uttar Pradesh) to abolish the slaughter of cows explaining to them the material benefits the cow yields to mankind. Later, he wrote 'Gokaunanidhi', fully showing the harm that the slaughter of cows was doing, and recounting the benefits that man derived from the cows. He even prepared a memorial to be signed by two or three crores of people from all over the country including the Indian Princes, to be submitted to queen Victoria and the British parliament asking for abolition of cow slaughter in India. Lakhs of signatures were obtained including those of several ruling princes such as their Highness, the Moharana of Udaipur, Maharaja of Jodhpur and Maharaja of Bundi. His premature death, however, put a stop to the movement.⁷¹ Dayananda writes :

One cow in one generation benefits 475-600 people through her milk, butter and offspring-male and female. Thus, some cows give thirty-two pints of milk, others not more than three pints daily, say for twelve months (some give milk for eighteen months, others for six, hence we have taken the mean the two). Calculating on this basis, we find that 24,960 persons can be fed at one meal with the milk given by one cow in her whole lifetime. On an average a cow gives birth to calves about twelve times during her whole life; supposing two of them die, of the remaining ten calves, say, there are five males and five females. The latter during their lives will together give enough milk to satisfy 124.800 persons at one meal. The remaining five male calves can produce at least 180 tons of corn, and supposing we allow 1, 1/2 lb or so corn per head, 180 tons will do on a rough estimate for 250.000 persons as food for one meal.⁷²

Swamiji ends the Gokarunandhi with the prayer, "O Supreme Ruler of all the rulers : O Lord of the universe ! If one protects these animals, arise to protect them and give us the strength and will to follow thee" .⁷³

Physical power, today is the dire need of society. In political, religious, and communal fields, strong invincible bodies are in great requisition. They will aid in fighting patriotic battles. They will save communities from the on slaughts of other communities. They will, above all, help in carrying the

message of the true faith to lands where barbarism rules, and unless one has to shelter it in a strong physical constitution, is sure to succumb. Dayananda then, the Dayananda that was indomitable, as much by dint of his physical power as by the wonderful radiance of his intellect and the marvelous magnetism of his spirituality, served as a model for that hankering humanity, which is impatient to press its pace in fields of politics, of scientific and philosophical research, and of religion alike.⁷⁴

In India, the land of Gods, because of their innocence and implicit faith in the supernatural, the people were victims of a number of superstitions. People believed in planetary influences like astrology (Nakshyatra), omens, evil spirits and ghosts. They tried to satisfy the deities for the fulfillment of their desires and believed in miracles. The Arya Samaj is the only institution which strove hard to fight against superstitions in India and abroad. Superstitious beliefs are responsible for degradation of a nation. Until and unless these beliefs are not wiped out no nation can progress. Arya Samaj deserves credit for this revolutionary action. It will be curious to note that even the Bhagabat Purana deprecates superstitious beliefs and hypocrisy. The Arya Samaj was the first body to denounce these malpractices.

The Arya Samaj also does not fail in its obligations to the society, hence devotes itself to the task of some socially-beneficial projects. The Arya Samaj engages in philanthropic work on a large scale. Outside Christian circle it was the first purely Indian Association to organize orphanages and widow homes. The first Hindu orphanage was established at Ferozepur, in the Punjab in the lifetime of the founder of the Samaj. It still retains its

position as the premier Hindu orphanage in India, has splendid and commodious buildings, all erected by private charity, and maintains schools and workshops for the training of boys and girls. There are a number of other orphanages on similar lines in Northern India, controlled and managed by the Arya Samaj; and besides these, many Hindu institutions and orphanages spread over India bear the impress and influence of the Arya Samaj.

The Arya Samaj has also organised relief in the times of social distress caused by natural calamities like famine, flood and earthquake. During the famine of 1897-98, 1899, 1900, 1902, 1907-08. The Arya Samaj provided reliefs to the people of the Natural Calamities effected areas in India. It was a very commendable service rendered by Arya Samaj in organising reliefs operations for the famine stricken people.⁷⁵

An important episode in the history of the Arya Samaj concerns its educational programme. In the nineteenth century India had come under the British rule and the conduct with the west began in a direct and more powerful effective way. The social renaissance movement in the country opened up new vistas and vision under the impact of the spread of western education. In the early years of the nineteenth century, the Britishers were more interested in territorial conquest and consolidating their political gains. The upliftment of the decaying Indian society socially, religiously, culturally and educationally was not within the orbit of their vision and functioning. It should be borne in mind that a small beginning towards the new western type of education had begun since the closing decade of the eighteenth Century. Hampton describes Charles Grant (1746-1823) as the founder of English education in India.

Lord Macaulay was responsible for the introduction of English education in India. Even prominent Indians like Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) the father of Indian renaissance movement in the first half of the nineteenth century also stood in the fore front of the movement for the spread of English education. Hampton describes him as the leader of a small but influential group of ardent reforms, who realized that changing social and political conditions made it imperative that India should emerge from her cultural isolation and come into closer contact with western thoughts and civilization.⁷⁶ Lord Macaulay made a highly audacious statement when he said that a single-shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. This statement shows that either Macaulay was biased against Indian writings and literature or was totally ignorant of the rich treasures of Sanskrit literature and philosophy. True to the expectations of Lord Macaulay, it created a class of people who were :- “Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion, words and intellect.”⁷⁷

Indian youths lost their cultural moorings and national pride about their glorious ancient cultural heritage. Though in body and colour of their skin, they remained Indians, yet in everything else ; in dress, in mode of living, in opinion, in habits, in manners, in values, in attitude they became Englishmen, nay, they became super-Englishmen : Indians began to die as a nation. Disintegration set in, communalism went deep into the Indian mind and education didn't help for enlightenment, character, social change, national integration, but it became a tool for getting jobs as clerks in government offices or as subordinate officers in government departments.

Against such a frustrated educational setting, Swami Dayanananda and other leaders of the Arya Samaj began their Lutheran struggle and campaign. In this Swami Dayananda shone as the polar star.⁷⁸ Swami Dayananda himself had seen the evil, disastrous consequences of the English education.⁷⁹ He was bitter about those English-educated Indians who imitated the western way of life and considered their own religion and culture as inferior to that of the British. Dayananda revolted strongly against this kind of perversion of the minds of the Indians through English education. He recommended a system of education based on Vedic values, deeply rooted in Indian traditions and culture. He was of the opinion that the past glory of India could be revived by establishing a large number Arya Vidyalayas where 'Brahmacharya' would form the nucleus for the integral development of the personality of the individual. Dayananda was of the opinion that every citizen had the right to education. Parents who fail to send their children to school, should be punished by the state.⁸⁰ Richard G. Fox says :

Envisioned an open social system with education and not birth as the determinant of states... Dayananda's world view appealed directly to the educated elite, drawn as it was heavily from the Vaishya (traditional merchant-money lender) caste. The way to material success to spiritual status and to social superiority was now one and the same-the path of education.⁸¹

Swamiji didn't favour co-education, and therefore, the Arya Samajist schools, colleges, and gurukulas have been non-co-educational. According

to Swamiji “A child should be sent to his her separate school only when he or she is of eight years old. Between the age period 5 to 8, Swamiji had outlined his own indigenous scheme.”⁸²

Thousands of D.A.V. and other Arya Samaj educational institutions throughout India and abroad, bear testimony of the Arya Samaj. Swami Dayananda, himself a distinguished scholar, was the product of India’s ancient gurushishya or teacher-disciple tradition of Gurukula education. This was based on the principle of brahmacharya which demanded a single-minded application to learning and knowledge, and celibacy and austerity till the completion of apprenticeship at least until the age of twenty-five. Dayananda’s first concern therefore was to revive this glorious heritage of learning and scholarship, which was based on very close personal and individual relationship between the teacher and the taught. In fact, gurukula means family of the guru or teacher of which the student is supposed to be a member.⁸³

The Arya Samaj has developed two distinct types of educational institutions viz. DAV school and college and the Gurukulas. On October 30, 1883 Swami Dayananda Saraswati died in, Ajmer. His demise left Aryas without their guru (religious teacher), the central figure of this entire movement. Dayananda had no spiritual heir to ensure ideological continuity, no bearer of knowledge to reinterpret doctrine, nor any institutional structure to proclaim proper and official dogma. Only his diverse writings remained to guide the faithful, and these were open to interpretation by each Samaj and each Arya.⁸⁴

The initial response of Aryas to Dayananda's passing proved quite uniform. In meeting after memorial meeting, speakers urged the founding of a school or college in honour of the departed prophet. Memorial meetings in Lahore, Ferozapore and Multan simultaneously passed resolutions calling for the establishment of a Dayananda college, where Vedas might be taught side by side with other learnings.⁸⁵ The Arya Patrika wrote thus :

There was one united purpose that the glorious life of the departed Swami should be immortalized and the proposal to found an Anglo-Vedic college in honour of his memory was unanimously adopted. The sight that followed was worth observing. Though the meeting was composed mostly of middle class men, Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8000 were subscribed on the spot. Women and children and even poor men zealously came forward with their might.⁸⁶

The Dayananda Anglo-Vedic-DAV High School opened in Lahore on June 1, 1886. Lala Hans Raj, a brilliant young graduate, became the principal of this institution on the basis of agreement to serve in this position without pay and for life. The school quickly proved a success, enrolling 550 students by the end of the month.⁸⁷ Three years latter, i.e. in June 1889, the college department began and when the department began, it had less than a dozen students, but then the school and the college began to take root, and became very popular. In 1913, the school had on its roll as many as 1,737 students

and the college 903 students, besides a sizable number studying in the purely Vedic department in the faculty of Hindu medicine and in the engineering and tailoring classes.⁸⁸

The college was the pride of the young, western educated Arya Samajist whose enthusiasm for a revival of classical Hindu learning was tempered by their respect for western science and technology. Its rapid rise to prominence was due chiefly to Hans Raj, a graduate of Punjab university in 1886, who donated his service without pay as headmaster of the high School and became honorary principal of the college and his equally young and vigorous associates, Guru Dutta Vidyarthi and Lala Lajpat Rai. The DAV college curriculum stressed Sanskrit studies, eliminating the degenerate past Vedic works which were despised by Dayananda but which were read at the Lahore oriental college.⁸⁹ To establish in the Punjab an Anglo-Vedic-college institution which shall include a school, a college, and boardinghouse, as a memorial in honour of Swami Dayananda Saraswati the following aims were taken into account.

- (1) To encourage, improve, and enforce the study of Hindu literature.
- (2) To encourage and enforce the study of classical Sanskrit and of the Vedas.
- (3) To encourage and enforce the study of English literature, and sciences both theoretical and applied.⁹⁰

In Lala Lajpat Rai's own words :

The enterprise was of an entirely novel character in this province. At first there was cause for discouragement,

some thought the attempt impractical and destined to end in failure like other native enterprises. But it had been inaugurated to commemorate a man whose name and work could never die, and it was this auspicious connection and the national character of the movement, which supported it at critical moments and encouraged its promoters to tide over all difficulties.⁹¹

Within the span of a few years, a network of institutions spread to meet the demands of the changing society. After fulfilling his pledge of 25 years of honorary service, Lala Hans Raj voluntarily relinquished his office to undertake the task of religious and social upliftment of the country, which, he thought was no less demanding. In earlier years the DAV society was greatly helped by Lala Lajpat Rai who later on appeared on the national scene as an illustrious patriot. He proved to be a source of great strength to Mahatma Hans Raj.

Very soon after its establishment, the DAV college Trust and Management Society started expanding, with Lahore as the nucleus of its activities. Besides the usual schools and colleges with their science and arts classes, it established an Ayurvedic college, an industrial training school, a technical institute, the Dayananda Brahma Vidyalaya for training preachers in Vedic principles and philosophy, a college for women, a Department of Indological Research and publications and teachers training school. It may thus be clear that the Dayananda's Anglo-Vedic movement was a bold attempt at the creation of new synthesis of values, taking the best elements of Eastern and Western

cultures. The demand for schools and colleges in other towns of the Punjab grew and slowly a network of DAV schools, high and middle sprang up in almost all the important places in the undivided Punjab, Beluchistan and other states.

The partition of the country in 1947, with its holocaust, dealt a crippling blow to the D.A.V. organisation, which had most of its institutions in Lahore. The society suffered incalculable losses in men and material. Property worth over two crores of rupees was left behind. Over six dozen institutions, big and small were uprooted.⁹²

As Suraj Bhan, the vice-chancellor of the Punjab university, has rightly said, "The DAV is the hallmark of excellence in the educational sphere and stands for a distinctiveness of the institutions which belong to this category."

Madan Mohan Verma adds :

The DAV institutions have reasons to be proud of the conspicuous service they have rendered in various sphere of social reform and nation-building in the past. They have, therefore, now to renew their spirit in facing the new challenges confronting our motherland. They have a role to play in the national integration of the country, and above all in turning out teams of youth imbued with faith in Dharma and a sense of mission to resolve the crisis of character that threatens to destroy our infant freedom and democracy.⁹³

More than 600 DAV institutions in India and abroad today are the incarnation of Dayananda Saraswati's dream of an ideal society.⁹⁴ The Arya Samaj is credited with a lead given to revive the Vedic tradition of the Gurukula type of educational system and institution. In fact the Gurukula type of educational institutions is regarded as the most original contribution of the Arya Samaj to modern Indian education. The Gurukula educational institutions established by the leaders of the Arya Samaj after the death Swamiji, bore a spirit of revolt. In its establishment, some of the very leading persons who had taken part earlier in the establishment of the pioneering D.A.V. college at Lahore participated prominently. Lalaji describes the origin of the Gurukula as "due to the same spirit of revolt which compelled Dayananda to forsake his parental home and became a wanderer in the quest of truth."⁹⁵

The establishment of the first D.A.V. college at Lahore was not all a rosy event. It created a spilt in the Arya Samajist leaders of the Punjab. This spilt was carried right through the rank and file of the Arya Samaj. Punjab—specially Lala Munshi Ram, Durga Prasad, Ram Bhaj Dutta Choudhury and others— who were originally in the forefront of the movement for innovating D.A.V. college, Lahore, felt dissatisfied with the educational programme of the college and the emphasis that came to be placed on the English language and western literature and sciences. They particularly felt that enough emphasis was not being laid on the study of Sanskrit literature and on the Vedas. They took the decision to separate and go their own way.⁹⁶

The first agitation for Gurukulas was sponsored by Lala Munshi Ram in 1897, and was supported by Arya patrika, and other papers. Later, the resolution to establish a Gurukula was adopted by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab, in November 1998; but for want of money, the matter continued to hang for some time. To overcome this difficulty, Mahatma Munshi Ram took a vow not to step into his house until the collection of thirty thousand rupees had been made.⁹⁷

Where there is a will, there is a way. The financial difficulty was soon solved only in about eight months. When the question of deciding the location of the first Gurukula came up the Arya Samaj leaders like Lala Rajaram and Rai Thakur Dutta advocated strongly that the proposed Gurukula should be set up near Lahore or Amritsar, as it would be easy to persuade people to donate land for the Gurukula; the Arya leaders of Hargovindpur proposed that it should be set up in their town and Lala Jagannath proposed that the Gurukula should be set up near the site of his large factory. But Mahatma Munshi Ram, the pioneer among leaders of the Gurukula movement, had long thought about the nature of the Gurukula. He insisted that the best location for the proposed Gurukula is the bank of some river. To support his views, he cited a verse in the Yajurveda which stressed the view that "A person develops his intelligence best and becomes learned by acquiring instruction from the teachers by residing near some mountain or on the meeting place of rivers."⁹⁸

And eventually Lala Munshi Ram's view regarding the location of the Gurukula prevailed. One Munshi Aman Sing, a resident of Bijnaur got the

‘inspiration’ that the proposed Gurukula be set up in his Kangadi village which is situated on the bank of the river Ganga. Some other leaders of the Arya Samaj of the Bijnaur district like Choudhuri Chuni Singh of Nathur, Baboo Mithanlal Khanna of Sharanpur, Choudhuri Fateh Singh of Rajpur and Choudhuri Sher Sing of Bijnaur also held the similar view. They played a leading role in getting the donation of the whole village of Kangadi for the establishment of the Gurukula Indra Vidya Vachaspati said :⁹⁹

Gurukula hut-ments began to be erected, and they were ready by 1902, However, the first Gurukula actually came into existence in 1900. It was named as the Gurukula Kangadi Viswavidyalaya. Pandit Ganga Dutta became its first Acharya. It enrolled the first batch of 24 students including Lala Munshi Ram’s two sons. The students were called brahmacharis on the pattern of the ancient Gurukula.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the first Gurukula under the Arya Samaj came to be established at Kangadi in 1902 and came to be known as Gurukula, Kangadi. It was a site between the Nilagiri and Niladhara with the Himalayas on one side and the Ganga on the other. It was amidst beautiful and awe-inspiring natural setting, children of the Gurukula grew up with constant commune with nature and under its inspiring and soul-building influence of nature.

In the midst of the Himalayan range of mountain, Ganga born at Gangotri, flows down to reach Haridwar. On

the banks of the said river, we see a Mahavidyalaya, Gurukula Kangadi, a living monument of what Shradhananda had conceived of and had given it a physical shape in 1900 still standing, under exquisitely beautiful surrounding.¹⁰¹

Bahadur Mal observes that after the establishment of the first Gurukula in 1900, "The Gurukula idea made a powerful appeal to the imagination of the people and the annual meetings of the Gurukula attracted large crowds of visitors."¹⁰² Sir James Meston, the Lieutenant-Governor of U.P. who visited the institution on 16 March 1913, remarks : "The Gurukula is one of the most original and interesting experiments carried on in these provinces, in fact in the whole of India."¹⁰³ Swami Shradhananda describes it as modelled on the great university of ancient India such as that of Taxila.¹⁰⁴ Rabindranath Tagore sees in it "An attempt to make education our own."¹⁰⁵

After Kangadi Gurukula came into existence, the Gurukula at Sikandarabad was established with the inspiration of Swami Dayanandaji, The Kanya Gurukula at Dehradun was established first at Delhi in 1923, which was shifted to Derahdun in 1927. This could be possible due to the efforts Mahatma Munshi Ram and assistance of Seth Raghmalji.¹⁰⁶

Indravidya Vachaspati mentions the following Gurukulas established during the first quarter of the present century :

- (1) Hoshangabad - (M.P.)
- (2) Badayun - (U.P.)

- (3) Pothohar - (Punjab)
- (4) Raipur - (M.P.)
- (5) Gujranwala - (Punjab)
- (6) Kolhapur - (Maharashtra)
- (7) Ajmer - (Rajasthan)
- (8) Kashi - (U.P.)
- (9) Bareilly - (U.P.)
- (10) Kashi (Kanya Gurukula) - (U.P.)
- (11) Chhatta (Kanya) Sindh - (Haryana)
- (12) Meerut - (U.P.)
- (13) Chitor - (Rajasthan)
- (14) Baidnath Dhan (U.P.)
- (15) Bombay - (Maharashtra)
- (16) Supa - (Gujarat)
- (17) Kangori - (Bangalore)
- (18) Anant Giri - (Hyderabad)
- (19) Bharatpur - (Hyderabad)

Later on more Gurukulas were established in the second quarter of the twentieth century during the British rule and a few in the post-Independent India.¹⁰⁷

The Gurukula remains even today one of the most wonderful, interesting and stimulating institutions. It is a living institution where students imbibe spiritual values in a highly materialistic society, get a grounding in character-building when character is being fast lost and where a school becomes a home and teachers and students become family members of the Gurukula. The Gurukula attempts to revive these great spiritual ideals which mould our unique cultural heritage. The Gurukula constitutes an effort with great inherent potentiality to rediscover the lost assets of India in the spheres of education, culture and religion. The Gurukula is, in a way, the hope of new India.

Swami Dayananda gave to the nation a new pattern of education with its inspiration from India's ancient educational and cultural heritage, which had started taking up the contemporary British model and which had potentiality turned out such men and women who would be strong intellectually, morally, spiritually and physically and who would develop their wholesome personality too.

Thus, the Arya Samaj as a movement has almost achieved its desired goal and the members of the organisation by their complete devotion, sincerity of purpose, unceasing zeal and continuous efforts have been able to not only root out the ills and evils plaguing the then Indian society, but also have succeeded in enlightening people in the fields of religion, education and culture and in doing so, they have merely achieved a praise-worthy synthesis of the ancient and the modern, the past and the future and the east and the west.



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