

# *Swami DayAnanda's* Vision of Truth

**Thematic Reflections of Satyarth Prakash  
(An Interfaith Dialogue)**

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## **Dedication**

The Mother's Gift  
For all her children

Your path is up and onwards,  
Never downwards

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*Bharat Main Angrezi: Kya Khoya Kya Paya* (Delhi, 1997)

*Swami Dayananda's Vision of Truth* (Delhi, 2002)

Translation of *Nine Upanishads* (Delhi, 1992)

Translation of *Swami Dayananda's Sanskar Vidhi* (Delhi, 1995)

Translation of *Swami Dayananda's* short writings in *Dayananda Granth Mala (Paropakarini Sabha, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 1999)*

Translation of *Swami Satya Pati's God Realisation through Simple Yoga* (Delhi, 2000)

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"*Swami Vivekananda's Vision of Man*" (Prabuddha Bharat, 1979)

"G.D.Birla: Gandhi's child", in Birla Felicitation Volume (BITS, Pilani, Rajasthan)

"Search for a Medium of Instruction in India", in Mitra Felicitation Volume (BITS, Pilani)

"Shakespeare as a Creative Yogi" in *World Response to Shakespeare*, the India section

And now: Voice of the Vedas, in the Arsha tradition of Maharshi Yaska and *Swami* Dayananda being published in Delhi by Ajay Kumar Govind Ram Hasanand Publishers.

Dr. Tulsi Ram Sharma has spent the last ten years on this translation of the four *Vedas*, all the time saying: "I came for this". While English has been the language of his professional communication, *Sanskrit* is the voice of his life and living.

## Homage, Thanks and Acknowledgements

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## To the Reader

*Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Satyarth Prakash* (Light of Truth) is one of the greatest single works on the *Sanatan Vaidic Dharma*, which in the popular language of history is called *Hinduism*. Published in 1885 in revised form, it caused an explosion in the dormant thought of the people of India. It was nothing less than a new sunrise on the religious, cultural and political horizon of the country. Since then the publication and distribution of this work has gone up to millions of copies in the original in Hindi and in translations into English, French, German, Chinese and Burmese.

Truth is infinite. No human expression can contain it. *Swamiji* himself had to go to the *Vedas*, the original revelation of truth from where he got the enlightenment. And he went even further. He went to the light of lights, the one teacher of all the teachers of the world, the Lord of the universe. He realized that presence in *samadhi*. *Satyarth Prakash* is the light of that experience of Divinity and his exploration into the depths of *Vaidic* knowledge.

In this great work, *Swamiji* draws heavily on the *Vedas*, *Brahmanas*, scholars' commentaries on the *Vedas*, *Nirukta*, *Manusmriti*, *Upanishads*, *Darshan* Philosophy and other works in the *Vaidic* and extra-*Vaidic* traditions of India and of other countries. In short, he has distilled the essence of truth, *Dharma* and religion. *Satyarth Prakash* touches upon almost every aspect of life and the reality of the universe, *Ishwara* (God), *Ishwara* (the individual soul) and *Prakriti* (nature, that is, matter, energy and thought); creation, revelation and knowledge; *Dharma*, religion, living and freedom; philosophy, ethics, economics, politics and governance; individual, society, the global community and the environment; education, discipline, household, work and retirement; and *Sarva-tantra-siddhanta*, a common universal faith for mankind so that, across all the religious differences and conflicts, humanity may live in peace with love and happiness--as one family with shared values.

*Swamiji's* vision in *Satyarth Prakash* is broad, comprehensive, and wholly relevant for all times and all places. Indeed, it can be ranked with the top ranking holy books of the world in circulation. Once you read it, you can not possibly put it away, you go to it again and again and each time you make new discoveries of truth. For this very reason, it has been published, republished and reprinted again and again not only in the original and in translation but also in simpler and abridged forms for adults and for children.

Why then this present work *Reflections of Satyarth Prakash*? When you read a book, you not only read it as something existing in itself on its own, you read it at your own wave-length also and discover the meaning which appeals to you at that wave-length. People have read *Satyarth Prakash* to discover those meanings also which *Swamiji* never intended, because at their wave-length they even distorted and deflected the light. This is clear from the works which some Hindu and non-Hindu scholars wrote in order to persist in their own beliefs some of which *Swamiji* had challenged. If we try to understand all that opposition, we shall find that the criticism arose from prejudice and partiality. But, in addition, it could have arisen from the difference of language -- words and idioms -- which those critical readers might or might not have expected from *Swamiji*. The critical dialogue with *Swamiji's* writing, thus, raises a question: Is *Swamiji's* language and meaning available to the modern reader at his/her wave-length? Does his thought need a new version for the modern consciousness?

One thing, of course, is true: whether we read *Satyarth Prakash* with faith and reverence, or with understanding and critical attitude, or with sheer prejudice and hostility, the light of truth is blazing

and *Swamiji's* challenge to ignorance superstition is forceful. During the last one century and a quarter, *Satyarth Prakash* has compelled the readers to reinterpret and restate their beliefs and reform their customs, manners, rituals and practices. The interesting part of all these reinterpretations and restatements is that all of them are as *Swamiji* would have suggested. In this scenario of criticism and countercriticism, it is important to bridge the gap between the idiom of *Satyarth Prakash* and the modern religious consciousness specially at a time when interfaith dialogue and religious coexistence is a common reality of life.

Secondly, it is further important that with all our modern consciousness, interfaith dialogue and policy of coexistence and cooperation, we can not lose sight of the current day fanaticism, fundamentalism and terrorism perpetrated in the name of religion and religious ethnicity. Religions can surely coexist on a common platform of universal faith and common human values in an international framework of a common social law of human *Rights* and duties, but fanaticism, terrorism and the concept of any chosen or favoured people of God cannot coexist with reason and truth. Therefore, the basic questions of truth and the essential facts of different faiths must be put together with the specific and indispensable loyalties of these faiths with courage, clarity and understanding. If we do so, it will be very difficult to ignore the questions raised by *Swami DayAnanda* and the answers suggested by him.

In this situation, specially for the English-speaking reader of average education, this version updates the appreciation of *Satyarth Prakash* with reference to its universal value. It restructures the ideas in a thematic composition and restates in English whatever light and reflection I have been able to gather with faith in *Swamiji* and love for all the readers whatever their faith, belief or religion. I have tried to refer every relevant quotation given in *Satyarth Prakash* to its original source, confirmed *Swamiji's* interpretation, added further evidence and comment wherever required by the theme and context, and tried to bring the light of *Swamiji's* work closer to the modern reader.

This work can be treated as a comprehensive introduction. It is suggested that after the reading of this work, the conscientious reader should go to the original work of *Swamiji* for full benefit and appreciation of the light brought out by him from the *Vedas* and the later scriptures. Nevertheless, if the reader is hard-pressed for time and can feel content with knowing what *Satyarth Prakash* is like, this work would serve the purpose.

I read *Satyarth Prakash* sixty years ago, in 1939, when I was at school. Since then I have been a student and a teacher at different colleges and universities in India and abroad. I have had discussions on literature and religion with my colleagues and great scholars. But I have never been able to get away from *Satyarth Prakash*, I have come to it again and again. An act of homage was due, and here it is.

This work is my own reflection of *Satyarth Prakash*. A reflection gives only a glimpse of the light, but if it is without the interference of a shadow it would be clear. I have tried to be clear and sincere without any attempt to interfere with the original or deflect from the meaning and intention of *Swamiji*. Whatever I have added to clarify, explain or amplify an idea from the original, I have done as a disciple in a manner of which *Swamiji* would have approved.

This work is not a translation of *Satyarth Prakash*, nor can it be a substitute for the original work which really presents, in the essence, the wisdom of the world from the *Vedas* down to the latest works of the sacred and secular traditions of human civilization. It is not even a summary of *Swamiji's* great work, it is only some reflections of his comprehensive vision of reality which he received from the *Vedas* and the works of the *Rishis*.

As reflections too it is a very modest attempt. It is common knowledge among the readers of *Satyarth Prakash* that Pandit Gurudatta *Vidyarthi* read it eighteen times and every time he discovered new and newer truths treasured in this work. If such was Pandit Gurudatta's experience of the light of *Satyarth Prakash*, how can an ordinary reader catch the light with his ordinary eyes of understanding? Still, this too is a fact that no one can fail to experience the impact of the light of truth which *Swamiji* captures, concentrates and directs in focus on to the reader's understanding. That light both disturbs and illumines and slowly settles in the mind if you are free from pre-commitments and prejudice. It is this impact of the light which is intended to be reflected in the pages of this work. Whether the reflections are dim or clear, it is for the reader to judge.

The purpose, however, is clear: The book is meant for an average English knowing reader who is keen to know about the thought of *Swami DayAnanda* in brief through the idiom of English language.

*Swamiji's* first language was *Gujarati*. The language of his education and thought was *Sanskrit*. But he chose *Hindi* for All-India communication. Therefore, his *Hindi* was conditioned by *Sanskrit* and influenced by *Gujarati* in idiom and structure. Further, the average reader today whatever his/her language -- *Hindi, Gujarati* or any other -- is influenced by the idiom of English which he/she breathes in the Indian air, and, for that reason probably, welcomes writings in English. It is for such a reader that this book is meant. It is also meant for any foreign reader who is basically interested in Indian thought. *Swami DayAnanda's* thought is scientific and universal, and such thought can be expressed in any language including English since it is free from local colour and the conditions of time.

*Swamiji's* word for a chapter of *Satyarth Prakash* is '*samullasa*' which means a brilliant reflection of light close to an explosion of illumination as at dawn. The chapters, herein, are reflections of reflections--second hand acts of communication if you wish to call them so. The whole attempt is meant to be an introduction to the great *oRiginal*. It re-states what *Swamiji* says in *Satyarth Prakash* and here and there provides such explanatory and illustrative comments as well as such comparative notes and references as were found necessary in today's context. The selection, analysis and organization of the contents of the *oRiginal* is mine and does not necessarily follow the thought scheme of the *oRiginal*. But I assure the reader that there is no departure at all from the thought, word and spirit of *Swamiji* anywhere for the reason that the soul of this work lies in faith and love--complete and uncompromising. For this very reason, I hope, the reader will find a thematic scheme in this organization of *Swamiji's* thought which will help him/her to understand and appreciate the range and depth of *Satyarth Prakash*. If this attempt persuades you to move to the *oRiginal*, either in Hindi or in translation, I shall feel more than amply rewarded.

Tulsi Ram Sharma

## Introduction

*Swami Dayananda Saraswati* (1825-1883) was one of the greatest men of modern India. Although he was born and brought up in an orthodox *Brahman* family and educated in the traditional *Sanskrit* system of 19th century India without access to the English system of education, he was one of the most modern men the world has ever seen. A saint, a scholar, a reformer and a *yogi* of high order, he was dedicated to truth, *Dharma* and the good life. The sole meaning and purpose of his life was the pursuit of truth--to bring to light what is true, whatever the cost might be. And the total dedication to truth also meant that he must expose whatever is not true. This he did without fear or favour or compromise.

What is truth? To see a thing as it is in reality, to believe what it is, to speak and write of it as it is: this is truth. Further, truth is not only the sincerity of belief and expression, it is also the truth of action in practical conduct and actual behaviour. The path of great men -- saints and sages, leaders and reformers of mankind, makers of history and the servants of God -- is the path of truth. *Swami DayAnanda* was one of such great men. What is true is good, said he, and the same is beautiful as well, not otherwise. Nothing shines, nothing succeeds and nothing lasts except the truth.

*Satyarth Prakash* (Light of Truth) is *Swami DayAnanda's* magnum opus of his vision of reality (truth) and his view of the good life (*Dharma*). It is the quintessence of knowledge: of nature, humanity and *Ishwara* (God), and the knowledge of how we should live as individuals, as families, as nations and as one, common, international community at the global level. The basis of his vision of truth and *Dharma* is reason, nature and the *Vedas*. In addition, he accepts the authority of the *Rishis* from *Brahma* to *Jaimini* and all other saints and sages who were men of pure and impartial reason and motive. He accepts the authority of the *Vedas* absolutely. But he accepts other authorities conditionally, that is, if their views are not counter to the *Vedas*, reason and nature.

According to *Swami DayAnanda*, the *Vedas* are divine knowledge which is absolute and eternal. They do not belong to any one nation or country, they belong to the entire humanity. Every human being has the *Right* to read the *Vedas* and benefit from them. They are not even Hindu scriptures, but they are regarded as Hindu scriptures only because the Hindus profess to follow them. Actually they are universal human scriptures. They should better be called *knowledge*. *Veda* really means knowledge. They belong to whosoever cares to read and follow them. We may sum up *Swamiji's* position in brief.

The world is real. It is governed by the laws of nature. These laws are the world's constitution. That is *Dharma*. We are all participant actors in the world. We are participants in *Dharma* as well. So we too have our *Dharma* and we must observe that. The creator and law-giver of the world is *Ishwara* (call It God or Allah or whatever you will as long as by that name one means 'The One Lord of the World'). His laws are eternal and universal. So *Dharma* is eternal and universal. That is what we call *Sanatan Dharma*. From this, we come to the following position:

1. If there is God as we believe there is, It is one, It cannot be two, three or more. It is -- has to be -- omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. Hence, It has to be formless (*Nirakara*) because It can not be contained in any form. It is Infinite.

2. If God is one, His creation is one. The law of creation is one. Hence, *Dharma* is one. *Dharma* is universal.
3. Humanity, as the creation of God, is one. The *Dharma* of humanity, too, is one. Human *Dharma* is universal too.
4. As God's children we are one family. All divisions of humanity are in violation of the laws of God.
5. The earth is our home. Nature is our mother. The world is given to us as our bigger home. But we have no *Right* to exploit it or to pollute it. Pollution is a sin equal to matricide.
6. We are all participants in the world. Nature gives us the means of living, so we must help nature in the renewal of her resources. Our life must be creative, productive and contributive. Creative living is *yajna*.
7. As members of one family, we have the duty to help and support all living beings.

In short, the world is a real, living, breathing, intelligent, self-organizing organismic sovereign system, the soul and governor of which is God who operates through His universal laws of nature. If we participate and obey, good. If we rebel and disobey, we suffer. That is the law of *karma*. The choice is ours, that is our freedom subject to law/*Dharma*.

8. God is omniscient. Humanity is intelligent but our intelligence a knowledge is limited. Hence God reveals the knowledge of existence for mankind at the dawn of creation.
9. That knowledge is the *Veda* and there are the four *Vedas*--*Rig-Veda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*.
10. As God's revelation, *Vaidic* knowledge is for all time true, full and complete. It is also knowledge pure and absolute. There is no history in the *Vedas*, the *Vaidic* style is wholly scientific and objective.
11. This knowledge is for all mankind without any discrimination at all.

But history is a reality too; you cannot deny. It is true in its own way and in its own *Right*.

Thus we have two aspects of reality and truth--one is constant, the other is variable. The constant is absolute (*Sanatan*), the variable is relative (*Nitya Nutan*). The former is eternal, the latter is historical. The constant takes changing forms and yet it remains the same all through the changing forms. Gold is gold whether it is in the form of a necklace, a pair of bangles or a jewel box. Similarly, you are you, yourself, whether you are a child, a teenager or a young or an old person. Gold is gold, you are you, only the forms change. The gold remains constant through the changing forms. You remain constant through your changing stages of life. The soul remains, the bodies change.

The same is true of the reality of the world and of *Dharma* (Law). The world is an organismic evolute of three basic and eternal entities in one: *Prakriti* (Nature), *Ishwaratmas* (the human souls) and *Ishwara* (God). *Prakriti* is real (*Sat*), *Jivatma* is real and intelligent (*Sat* and *Chit*), and *Ishwara* is real, intelligent and blissful (*Sat-chid-ananda*) infinitely. *Prakriti* is a constant in variable forms

(like gold in variable forms). *Jivatma* gets involved with various forms of *Prakriti* and, according to its will to live, assumes body forms such as human, animal and others under the laws of existence. *Ishwara* is the un-involved supreme power who creates, sustains and at the end completes each round of the cycle of creation. This threefold unity is eternal, and it is constant at the heart of this variety of the changing world which is governed by the cosmic laws of creation, the Universal *Dharma*. During the state of creation, this whole reality is dynamic. At the end of creation, it recedes into a static state in which nothing but *Ishwara* is wakeful--because the Lord never recedes into the unconscious.

*Dharma* (Law) too is eternal and universal. It comes into operation with creation and remains in operation upto the end of it. It operates in all the various modes and forms of existence. There are laws, for example, of the physical world, of the biological world, and of the world of the mind. There are laws of the individual mind and laws of the collective mind. This law is operative in everything from the smallest particle of matter, every wave of energy and every vibration of thought to the largest galaxy and the entire dynamics of the universe.

We as human beings are subject to the laws of human existence. Everything is subject to the laws of its own existence and it observes its own *Dharma*. We as human beings observe the laws of human existence and these laws are human *Dharma*.

But there is a difference between the human and the other forms of life. We are intelligent beings, blessed with the gift of reason and self-consciousness. Other forms are intelligent only to the limits of instinct and they are not conscious of their intelligence and reason. Whether they live an individual life, or a collective life such as bees and ants do, they do so instinctively. They observe their *Dharma* instinctively, not consciously. They are all conditioned by nature completely, their way of life is determined. We too are conditioned by nature: for example, we cannot fly as birds do. But within our conditions we are free: for example, we have invented the aeroplane to fly. So our intelligence, reason and consciousness give us the knowledge of ourselves and the freedom to make a choice in any situation to act this way or that. For this very reason, we know the value of our acts or non-acts and we know that we are and shall be responsible for our acts.

Because of our intelligence, reason, consciousness, and the spirit of freedom, the Lord of the Universe, *Ishwara*, blessed us with the gift of divine knowledge, the *Vedas*, at the very dawn of creation through the *Rishis--Agni, Vayu, Aditya and Angira*.

*Veda* is knowledge as has been said earlier. This knowledge is threefold:

1. Knowledge of existence and the laws of existence (*Jnana*),
2. Knowledge of our duties and the ways of working (*Karma*),
3. Knowledge of how to break through our limitations and reach to the top to be with *Ishwara* (*Upasana*).

The *Vedas* also give us knowledge of our freedom of choice to work for our rise or fall. They also give us knowledge of our *Dharma* and *dharmic* values and the ways and forms of action (*Karma*) to realize those values. This freedom of choice and action is the progressive dynamism of the *Atman* (Soul) which refuses to go down under the pressure of circumstances. The *Vedas* give us the universal code of values.

Values are permanent, the ways and forms of realizing these are different according to the difference of space. For example, truth, goodness, life, beauty, piety, knowledge, justice, plenty and prosperity,

love and non-violence, unity, peace, progress, happiness, all these are values. These have been accepted as values since the world began and will continue to be accepted for all time in future. But people have worked for all these in different ways and sometimes the difference has been so wide that one way has been the opposite of the other. For example, one community may say that worshipping an idol of God means piety; another may believe that to destroy an idol is an act of the highest piety. One community might kill the best animal as sacrifice to please God, while another might believe that such killing is sin. Service of God and piety of conduct is a value for both but the ways to realize the value are contradictory. The different ways of value realization are history. The historical way is 'Yuga-Dharma' (religion). The essential value is part of universal *Dharma*.

The *Right* way to realize the permanent values of *Dharma* is *Yajna*, a positive, creative, productive and contributive way of living, acting and participating in the creation of the Lord who is the father of all His children. Everyone should realize his/her happiness and progress through the happiness and progress of all. *Yajna* is the best and the highest way of living, the one *Right* way for all. *Yajna* thus is the value and also the way to realize the value. *Yajna* is a *Vaidic Dharmic Karma* because it is creative and constructive, not destructive.

Going back to human nature. With freedom of choice the human being has more than one way of living to choose from. One way is creative, the way of service and surrender. This is the way of *Yajna*, piety, worship. The other way is possessive, the way of exploitation. This is the way of the ego, selfishness and destruction. The former is positive, the latter is negative. The former is *Daivi* (virtuous), the latter is *Asuri* (sinful), as the *Gita* says. These ways are followed through history.

So selfish people vitiated even *Yajna* and the other ways of *Dharma*. They introduced blood, fear and violence into the pious act of *Yajna*. They created forms of *Ishwara* and sculpted them into forms and idols. Worship as an act of mind and heart from the depths of the *atman* (soul) became a mechanical ritual of baby-sitting. The gods were made to sleep and wake and dance. This degeneration of *dharmic* forms is described in detail in *Satyarth Prakash*, Chapter XI. Mahatma Buddha and Mahavir *Swami* revolted against this violence and vulgarity. They insisted on *Karma* as the essential *Dharma* of life. But under the pressure of circumstance and insistence on *Karma*, they missed the original source of *dharmic* knowledge, the *Veda*, and ignored and even denied the existence of God in their world-view. Ultimately, they or their followers replaced *Ishwara* with human gods in a God-less world. This scene is described in *Satyarth Prakash*, Chapter XII. Then followed Shankar *Swami*. He challenged the philosophy of Mahatma Buddha and Mahavir *Swami* to prove that "far from being a Godless world, there is nothing here but God (i.e., *Brahma*). The world that looks real and solid is nothing objective, it is only appearance and illusion." Shankar *Swami* won the battle of philosophy but the battle of *Karma* was lost. India fell to alien races and alien religions. All this happened because the reformers like Mahatma Buddha, Mahavir *Swami* and *Swami Shankaracharya* created their own philosophies of reform for the time. They failed to refer back to the original source of *Dharma*, the *Vedas*. The result was that in the search for the new the *Sanatan* was lost.

The India of the Middle Ages and later on especially of 19th century was at the lowest level of human action, vitality and national identity. *Dharma* had become a jungle of creeds. National pride was crushed under the imperial boot. The roots of *Dharma*, culture and civilization were drying up and dying under the onslaught of English. Ignorance and superstition were rampant, and illiteracy was the bane of the day. Humanity born with the eternal message of universal freedom was a slave.

It was at this time that *Swami DayAnanda* appeared on the scene. To understand his life and work we can not do better than refer to another great man of modern times, *RabIndra* Nath Tagore. He says:

"I offer my homage of veneration to *Swami DayAnanda*, the great path maker in modern India, who through bewildering tangles of creeds and practices, the dense undergrowth of the degenerate days of our country, cleared a straight path that was meant to lead the Hindus to a simple and rational life of devotion to God and service for man. With a clear-sighted vision of truth and courage of determination he preached and worked for our self-respect and vigorous awakenment of mind that could strive for a harmonious adjustment with the progressive spirit of the modern age and at the same time keep in perfect touch with that glorious past of India when it revealed its personality in freedom of thought and action, in an unclouded radiance of spiritual realiSation."

Progressive dynamism of the spirit revealed and persued in freedom of thought and action: This is modernity rooted in universality: *Sanatan, nitya nutan*.

Modernity does not consist in the knowledge of the English language or of any particular language for that matter. Nor does it consist in the knowledge of any particular literature, English or any other. Nor does it mean dedication to any particular period of history such as the twentieth century, for example. Modernity is a dynamic attitude of the mind. It refuses to be bound by time, place or circumstance; it insists on initiative and freedom of thought and action. It does not worship the past, but it does not necessarily reject it either. With a broad vision of time and history, it values the constant in the variable and seeks to realize the permanent values of life in new forms. *Swami DayAnanda* rejected the outmoded forms of belief and action, referred back to the permanent message of the *Vedas* and exhorted the Indians to renew and rebuild their life and culture in new forms which were relevant in the new age.

*Swami DayAnanda's* message is generally understood as '*Back to the Vedas*'. No, it was rather *Up and Onward from the Vedas*. If modernity and newness loses its moorings, it is lost in a maze of confusion. History without the central reference point is merely peripheral and blind.

*Swamiji* never said that he was starting a new religion. At the end of *Satyarth Prakash*, in his Statement of Belief / Faith, he wrote:

"It is not my purpose to start a new faith. I accept and believe only what is true and reject what is not true. My purpose is to state the truth and persuade others to accept the truth and reject the untruth."

*Swamiji* stood for a universal faith for a global community, which is and would be a body of permanent common values as accepted by mankind in the past and at the present time and which would be acceptable in future time as well. That would be a common, eternal, universal human faith, *Sanatan Dharma*. No one can or does or would deny or oppose such values. All well-meaning, well-intentioned persons, lovers of truth and goodwill accept these; the proud and the selfish may not, but they do not set the human standards. "My faith is only that which is true and acceptable to all for all time," he did not say, Nor am I partial to any faith current in India My faith is universal truth, universal values and universal justice in thought, belief and action."

*Swamiji's Satyarth Prakash* enshrines this universal truth of universal human values in a spirit of universal love and justice. The first ten chapters constituting Part I of *Satyarth Prakash* are positive

and affirmative. They state what *Swamiji* calls *Sarva-tantra-siddhanta* (Principles of Universal Faith). *Swamiji* summarizes their contents in the 'Introduction' to *Satyarth Prakash* chapter-wise:

1. Meaning and explanation of Aum and other names of *Ishwara*, the One God of the Universe,
2. Rearing and teaching of children,
3. Formal education and the discipline of *Brahmacharya*,
4. Marriage and household,
5. Retirement and renunciation, and social service,
6. Socio-economic organization, government, and administration,
7. *Ishwara* (God), *Jivatma* (Soul) and Revelation (*Vedas*),
8. Creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world,
9. Knowledge and ignorance, freedom and bondage,
10. Ethics of good conduct and humanitarian diet.

These chapters are chiefly based on the *Vedas*. *Swamiji* also draws upon the *Upanishads*, *Darshan* philosophy, *ManuSmriti* and the *Brahmanas*.

Part II of *Satyarth Prakash* consists of four chapters. This part is mainly a critical interfaith dialogue. Its contents are:

11. Various sects and faiths of the *Pauranic* tradition prevailing in India,
12. Charvaka, *Buddhism* and *Jainism*,
13. Christianity,
14. Islam.

This part of *Satyarth Prakash* has often been criticized by those who have misunderstood *Swamiji's* purpose and intention. *Swamiji* himself says in the 'Introduction':

"I do not mean to hurt or oppose anybody. My purpose is to state the universal truth and distinguish it from what is not true."

He did not criticize any religion for the sake of criticism or opposition. In fact, he accepted the universal truth of all religions. He says:

"In all religions universal truths are to be found. Universal truths are those which are to be found alike in all religions, which are for universal application and to which no one can be opposed because they are of common interest for all. There are many learned men in all religions, there is no doubt. Should they free themselves from prejudice, accept the universal truths and reject all those things on which they differ and which they mutually oppose, and if they treat one another with love and understanding, it will be to the great advantage of the world. For it cannot be denied that differences among the learned create bad blood among the ignorant masses. This leads to the increase of sorrow and suffering and destroys human happiness."

*Swamiji* stood and worked for a common universal faith. More than once he invited the learned men of various religions to come together, discuss the fundamentals of their religion freely and frankly and work out a common human faith for all. He held discussions with Pandits, Maulvis and Christian fathers, but this plan and programme remained a dream, no one listened.

The difficulty in the way of a common faith, *Sarva-tantra-siddhanta* (Principles of Universal Faith) is that the leaders do not agree on the fundamental truth of religion. According to *Swamiji*, universal truth alone is the fundamental truth of a religion. But the fundamentalists insist that the historical past of a religion also is fundamental. For example, in many cases, alongwith the universal truth, the name of the prophet also is an essential part of that truth. But according to *Swamiji* truth is impersonal and non-historical. Can we say that the laws of gravitation are true for the reason that Newton pronounced them? Can we say that the Theory of Relativity is true because Einstein discovered it and formulated the law? No, Truth is Truth, whosoever might have proclaimed it. The historical part of a religion is history, the truth part of it is valuable as truth. In historical religions, upto ninety percent is history.

As an example, take the Islamic proclamation of faith: God is One and absolute and Mohammad is His messenger. Which part of this proclamation is universally acceptable? Every well-meaning person of any faith would agree that God is one and absolute, but it is likely that there may not be a common agreement on the latter part of the statement. On the other hand, if you believe only in the first part of this proclamation, hardly any follower of the Muslim faith would accept you as a faithful believer.

Today we are living in an age of science and reason. We respect universal human *Rights* and work for the equality and unity of mankind as a global community. We hold interfaith dialogues for mutual understanding and cooperation. Yet, fanaticism, fundamentalism and religious and religio-ethnic terrorism is on the rise. This is because we do not yet have the courage and open-mindedness to face the real question on religion: What is true and what is not true? What is universal and what is only historical and accidental? If we want peace, unity and happiness of the peoples of the world, we shall have to face the questions and hold a dialogue the way *Swami DayAnanda* wanted to hold. And the talk shall have to be as frank and bold as *Swamiji's* in the latter part of *Satyarth Prakash*. Religion is a powerful force and the differences and oppositions shall have to be addressed with equal strength and honesty. 'Religion' means Reconnection to the One universal God, the one universal truth and law (*Dharma*), and the one oRiginal and universal Revelation, *Veda*, the knowledge.

*Satyarth Prakash* deserves to be read carefully with understanding and open mind from cover to cover.

## Part-1

### CHAPTER -1

#### ***Ishwara (God) is one***

*Ishwara* (God) is one. His names are many: Saints and sages celebrate the One by many names:

*Ekam Sadvipra bahudha vadanti (Rig-Veda, 1, 164, 46)*

They say He is *Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Divya, Suparna, Garutman, Yama, Matarishva*, etc. All these names are meaningful since they describe the attributes (nature, character, qualities, powers and acts) of the same one God. *Swami DayAnanda* explains the meanings of the names in the first chapter of *Satyarth Prakash*.

*Aum* (usually written as OM) is the absolute Word for God. It is the Lord's very own name, innate, original, first and best, the highest all-comprehensive name. Each one of the three phonemes (sounds) A, U, and M, stands for a lot of the attributive names but the whole word transcends the sum of all these names and extends to the infinite beyond the reach of language and mind as the *Mandukyopanishad* (7 and 12) says.

*Swami DayAnanda* explains some of the names included in the single word Om. He takes up each one of the three sounds, takes up the words/ names signified by it and explains the meanings on the basis of etymology and grammar. A stands for *Virat, Agni and Vishva*, etc. U stands for *Hiranyagarbha, Vayu, and Taijasa*, etc. M stands for *Ishvara, Aditya and Prajna*, etc. Let us study the structure and meaning of a few name-words for illustration and then follow the other words with their meanings as given by *Swamiji*.

#### *Virat*

This word is derived from the root *rajr* (which means 'to shine') with the prefix *vi* and suffix *kvip*. It means 'that power and presence which shines in and illuminates everything moving and non-moving of this world of wide variety.'

#### *Agni*

This word is derived from the root *ancu* which means 'to move, to worship'. It can also be derived from *ag, agi* and *in* which also mean 'to move'. Movement also is of three kinds: progress in knowledge, movement in space and movement towards the achievement of something, that is, attainment of success. Hence, *Agni* means 'the lord that is knowledge itself, the Omniscient, the One that human beings should know, worship and realize.'

#### *Vishva*

The word is derived from the root *Vish* which means ‘to enter’. Hence *Vishva* means ‘the presence in which all the forms of the universe such as space, etc., have entered and in which they rest’ or ‘the power and presence which pervades all the forms of creation.’

Now the meanings of the other words signified by U and M:

*Vayu*

Means ‘the supreme power which is the very breath and fragrance of the world, and maintains as well as destroys it when that breath of life is withdrawn.’

*Taijasa*

Means “the Lord who is self-luminous and gives the light to all the stars of the world.”

*Hiranyagarbha*

Means “the Great Womb of the universe from which the brilliant stars and planets take their birth and in which they rest.”

*Ishwara*

Means “the Power that is the lord of truth and knowledge.”

*Aditya*

Means “the Lord that is one, whole, perfect and eternal, indivisible and imperishable.”

*Prajna*

Means “the lord omniscient, who knows clearly without a shadow of doubt all the forms of the universe and their nature, character and behaviour.”

Now, there is a question: If Om is the very name of God, why so many other names ? The answer is that while Om is the absolute name of God, all other names are relative and descriptive. Every other name describes one or the other attribute of God. God’s powers, attributes, characteristics, qualities, acts, etc., are infinite. Accordingly, the words that describe these are also many, in fact, infinite. Therefore, while the one word Om remains the absolute name, the other names too have their meaning and relevance. They describe the nature, qualities and actions of the one God.

Swami DayAnanda explains in detail, on etymological principles, the meanings of the names of God including Om. The Lord is:

<i>Om</i>	The Saviour and the Protector;
<i>Kham</i>	Expansive, just as the space is, and omnipresent;
<i>Brahma</i>	The greatest of all, and all-pervasive;
<i>Param Purusha</i>	The ultimate personality, the teacher of all, subtler than the subtlest, light of lights, knowable through intelligence in the state of <i>samadhi</i> communion;
<i>Manu</i>	Knowledge itself;
<i>Prajapati</i>	Sustainer guardian of all;
<i>Indra</i>	Lord of power and glory;
<i>Prana</i>	The source and support of life and energy;
<i>Brahma</i>	Creator of the world;
<i>Vishnu</i>	Omnipresent and infinite;
<i>Rudra</i>	Scourge of the evil-doers;
<i>Shiva</i>	Good and kind to all;
<i>Akshara</i>	The imperishable;

<i>Svarat</i>	The self-luminous;
<i>Kalagni</i>	The death of the world including death itself;
<i>Divya</i>	Light of the world;
<i>Suparna</i>	Lord of gracious acts, and perfect;
<i>Garutman</i>	The magnanimous;
<i>Matarishva</i>	Powerful as the wind;
<i>Bhumi</i>	The home of all the living beings;
<i>Mitra</i>	Friend and lover of all, worthy of love and worship;
<i>Varuna</i>	Worthy of choice who loves all and chooses the <i>Righteous</i> for Grace.
<i>Aryama</i>	The dispenser of justice, worshipped by lovers of truth and justice;
<i>Brihaspati</i>	Greatest of the great, presiding over the universe;
<i>Urukrama</i>	Lord of infinite potential;
<i>Sham</i>	Giver of peace and bliss;
<i>Surya</i>	The very light and life of the world;
<i>Paramatma</i>	The supreme all-pervasive spirit of the universe;
<i>Parameshwara</i>	Lord of the greatest powers of creation;
<i>Savita</i>	Creator and father of the universe;
<i>Deva</i>	Lord of light and happiness, giver of peace and glory;
<i>Kubera</i>	Ultimate shelter, cover and protector of all;
<i>Prithivi</i>	Creator of an expansive universe;
<i>Jala</i>	Who brings the creation together and makes it fall asunder with cosmic law and justice;
<i>Akash</i>	Who lights up the world;
<i>Anna</i>	Who nourishes all;
<i>Annada</i>	Who receives all as fire receives all the offerings;
<i>Atta</i>	Who consumes all that He receives;
<i>Vasu</i>	Who resides in all and in whom the whole world; resides;
<i>Narayana</i>	Who pervades the waters of life;
<i>Chandra</i>	Bliss itself and giver of bliss;
<i>Mangala</i>	Kind benefactor of all;
<i>Budha</i>	The enlightened, and giver of enlightenment to all;
<i>Shukra</i>	Pure and immaculate, free from sin and the saviour of sinners;
<i>Shanaishchara</i>	Rolling in all with calm and patience;
<i>Rahu</i>	Sole power that forsakes the evil and helps the good to freedom from evil;
<i>Ketu</i>	The abode of the world, saviour from pain and giver of ultimate salvation;
<i>Yajna</i>	Bringer of the elements of creation together, all-pervasive and object of worship;
<i>Hota</i>	Giver of things to living beings and receiver;
<i>Bandhu</i>	Who binds all in love and law and is bonded with us as brother;
<i>Pita</i>	Father, helping, maintaining and protecting us as His children;
<i>Pitamaha</i>	Father of our fathers;
<i>Prapitamaha</i>	Father of all our forefathers;
<i>Mata</i>	The mother, who nurses, nourishes and blesses us with happiness;
<i>Acharya</i>	The master who gives us the knowledge of life and conduct;
<i>Guru</i>	The first teacher who reveals the knowledge of the <i>Vedas</i> for mankind;
<i>Aja</i>	Himself unborn, creator of the universe;
<i>Satya</i>	The power and presence that truly is and never changes;
<i>Jnana</i>	Knowledge itself of the whole creation and more;
<i>Ananta</i>	Lord Eternal beyond all bounds without end;
<i>Anadi</i>	Eternal, without beginning, without any cause existing before Him;

<i>Ananda</i>	Bliss itself, and abode of blessed souls in <i>Moksha</i> ;
<i>Sat</i>	The power that is, unaffected by time and age;
<i>Chit</i>	Lord Omniscient, giver of knowledge;
<i>Sacchidananda</i>	Ever-existent, intelligent and blissful spirit of the universe;
<i>Nitya</i>	Eternal, firm and immovable;
<i>Shuddha</i>	Pure, immaculate, purifier of all;
<i>Buddha</i>	Lord of light, giver of enlightenment to all;
<i>Nirakara</i>	Formless because no form can contain Him;
<i>Niranjana</i>	Beyond definition, colour, design, shade or perception;
<i>Ganesh</i>	Lord of all the things and species and classes in existence;
<i>Ganapati</i>	Guardian of all categories of creation;
<i>Vishveshvara</i>	Lord of the universe;
<i>Kutastha</i>	Existing at the heart of things;
<i>Devi</i>	The power and intelligence which blesses all with life and joy;
<i>Shakti</i>	The power that creates and maintains the world;
<i>Shri</i>	The power that is grace and object of worship;
<i>Lakshmi</i>	The power that creates and watches all forms of existence and is the object of worship;
<i>Sarasvati</i>	Supreme giver of universal knowledge, intelligence and language;
<i>Sarvashaktiman</i>	Lord Omnipotent, the sole efficient cause of the world;
<i>Nyayakari</i>	The lord of justice who does <i>Right</i> without fear or favour;
<i>Dayalu</i>	Kind and merciful giver of knowledge and freedom from fear;
<i>Advaita</i>	Sole self-existent Lord without a second of the same or similar order;
<i>Nirguna</i>	The power above and beyond the properties and limitations of the modes of nature or of the individual souls;
<i>Saguna</i>	Lord of infinite powers such as omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence;
<i>Antaryami</i>	Universal presence at the heart of things that impels them to abide by
<i>Dharma;</i>	
<i>Dharmaraja</i>	The light and power of <i>dharma</i> , the universal law of <i>Right</i> ;
<i>Yama</i>	Lord of universal justice who dispenses the fruits of our actions;
<i>Bhagavan</i>	Lord of power and glory and the object of worship by all;
<i>Purusha</i>	Immanent spirit of the universe;
<i>Vishvambhara</i>	The power that holds and sustains the universe;
<i>Kala</i>	The power imperishable that ticks away the age of things to the end;
<i>Shesha</i>	The power that lives and lasts with the world and after;
<i>Apta</i>	Lord of knowledge, first teacher and the object of worship and realization;
<i>Shankara</i>	Who blesses us with peace of mind, goodness and grace;
<i>Mahadeva</i>	Light of lights, power of powers of the universe, lord of saints;
<i>Priya</i>	Darling of all the living things, who blesses us with peace prosperity and happiness;
<i>Svayambhu</i>	Sole self-existent and independent;
<i>Kavi</i>	Eternal poet whose voice is the poetry of the <i>Vedas</i> ;
<i>Vishvakarma</i>	The maker of the universe;

By way of caution, *Swamiji* raises two questions with their answers in relation to the names of God:

1. Some of these words are names of gods such as '*Indra* ', '*Agni* ' '*Shiva* ' etc.,
2. Some words are names of other objects such as *agni* (fire) *prithivi* (earth), *surya* (sun) and *chandra* (moon).

Why take them as names of God? Or, why not take these objects as gods?

*Swamiji* says: God is one and only one. There are no other gods but One, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He alone is the object of worship. What some people call gods, are '*devas*' but they are not objects of worship. *Swamiji* then explains the meaning of '*deva*'. The word is derived from the root '*divu*' which means 'to shine, to play, to win ', etc. Any power that shines, feels creative joy, gives, wins and helps others to win is a '*deva*'. The *Surya* (sun) is a *deva*, *Agni* (fire) is a *deva*, *Vayu* (wind) is a *deva*, *Indra* (electricity) is a *deva*. They are powers of nature, no doubt, but they are not God, nor are they objects of worship. In fact, saints and sages, teachers and scholars too are '*devas*' because they are benefactors of mankind. They are worthy of respect and reverence, but they are not worshipped as God. God is one, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Nothing else can be such, and no one else should be worshipped as the One absolute God.

**Problem of Context and Interpretation:**

Aum is the only one absolute name of God. Other names are names of God in view of His powers. But the same words are names of other objects as well. Now the problem is: Wherever such a word is used, how to know whether it is the name of God or of some other power? The answer is: Keep in mind the context and purpose of the use of the word and then interpret the meaning.

*Swamiji* gives an example of this method of interpretation: Take the word '*saindhava*' which means 'salt' as well as 'a horse'. If you are dining at the table and ask for '*saindhava*', what you want is salt, not a horse. But if you are starting on a journey and ask for '*saindhava*', you need a horse, not salt. It would be foolish to bring salt when you are going on a journey, or present you a horse at the dining table. So when a word such as '*Agni*' or '*Surya*' is used in the context of worship or the creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe, the word means God. But when the subject is cosmology, astronomy or physical science, '*Agni*' means heat and light, and '*surya*' means the sun.

Keep in mind the context and purpose of the use of a word, and you will be on the *Right* track in the matter of interpretation.

## CHAPTER -2

### Child Education

After the names of the Divine, *Swamiji* takes up the human. And the essential distinction of the human being is reason, culture and education.

According to him no person is a full human being unless he/she is properly educated as a refined individual and responsible citizen with professional competence. A real human being should be able to play his/ her part in society positively and truthfully with moral courage and spiritual strength.

#### **Education: The essential qualification for humans:**

Without education, a person is only a natural person born as any other animal is born. An educated person is rational, moral and spiritual. Education is a process of discipline almost as hard as rebirth through which a person develops from the natural to a rational identity with moral character and spiritual vision. An educated person thus, is twice-born, a *dvija*. Using the language of older times, we may say that a natural (uneducated) person is a *shudra*, an educated person is a '*dvija*'. Therefore, *Swamiji* says that education is a fundamental and universal *Right* of every human being, whatever the family of his/her birth. Every child, male or female, must be sent to school earliest at the age of five and latest by the age of eight.

When does the education of a child begin? Not really at the age of five or nine at school. It begins earlier, earlier than even the birth of the child, even before the child is conceived. *Swamiji* quotes from the *Shatapatha Brahmana*:

Matirman pitriman *acharyavan* purusho *Veda*.

Which means a child has three teachers: mother, father and teachers. No person becomes fully educated unless he/she is taught and disciplined by all these three. The first of the three, of course, is the mother. The instruction, attitudes and range of values which a child receives from the mother far exceeds that received from any other person or institution. No one can love or think of the good of a child more than the mother. The mother is therefore the first and the most powerful teacher. Blessed is the child whose mother and father are well educated and virtuous. Blessed is the mother who instructs and forms the child from the day it is conceived to the completion of education.

According to *Swamiji*, the birth of a child is not an accident, nor is the child a weed in the family garden. The child is the sweetest bloom of intelligent love and careful planning. It is to be nursed, tended, moulded and refined into full form with imagination and selfless devotion.

#### **Where does this planning start:**

It starts with the marriage of the parents to be. The bride and the bridegroom should be of agreeable nature, character, habits and behaviour. Their culture, manners and values should be matching so that there is perfect peace and harmony in the home. An unhappy home cannot have happy and promising children. When the husband and wife decide to have a child, they should see that their food and drink is conducive to good health of body and mind. They should give up liquor and other intoxicants, stale and bad-smelling food, rough and tasteless preparations, things which have a bad

effect on the brain. They should, instead, take wholesome food and drink, which is clean and pure, conducive to peace of mind, good health, strength and energy, a sharp intellect, good conduct and graceful manners, a sense of honour and noble deeds. Foods prepared with butter, honey, fresh fruits and vegetables are nourishing as well as purifying. They purify the vital energy of the father and the mother. *Swamiji* insists, without having been a formal biologist, on the purity and sanctity of the fertilized egg in the mother's womb, and that is possible only when the parent's food and blood is pure and unsullied. That is how the preparation and planning for the new arrival has to start.

The expecting mother should be very careful in matters of food and drink. Both husband and wife should keep a happy home, free of all disturbance or indulgence. They should keep apart sexually for at least one year after the conception. Everything which the mother takes, feels or suffers affects the baby in the womb. The health and discipline of the parents is very essential for the growth of the baby's health of body and mind. During pregnancy, the mother's food and health is vital to the new arrival.

After the birth of the baby, both the baby and the mother must be kept in very clean environment. The room must be clean. There should be very good arrangements for proper bath of the mother and child. The clothes they wear must be clean, pleasing and comfortable. There should be daily 'havan' with ghee and fragrant materials. The baby should be breast-fed or given milk of a cow or goat supplemented with nourishing herbs. The mother should have food and drink conducive to the health of the body and mind of the baby and her own. Where breast-feeding is not possible or the milk of cow or goat is not available, other suitable arrangement should be made.

As the baby grows up as a child, education by the mother starts. *First the discipline of the body.* If the child touches a vital part of the body, the mother should stop it, because playing with the body parts at the early stage later leads to wantonness. Catch them young: this is the first principle of child education, according to *Swamiji*.

*Then comes speech education.* When the child starts to speak, the mother should see that his/her speech is correct and clear and the tongue is flexible and manipulable according to the need of articulation of the sounds of speech. For example, the place of articulation of the sound 'P' is the lips, and it is a voiceless plosive. In simple words, 'P' is pronounced with both lips closed then suddenly opening. So the mother has to see that the place and mode of the child's articulation of the sounds of speech is correct and clear. The child should be guided in the pronunciation of vowels with the correct sense of short, long and prolated quantity. The pronunciation of vowels and consonants should be clear, and the structure of phrases and sentences should be clear and correct. Then the tone of speech is important. The child's tone should be sweet, serious and pleasing. Speech is the first measure of education, manners and culture anywhere, anytime.

#### **Now manners:**

As the child grows and advances in speech, the mother should guide him/her how to meet and speak to the younger as well as to the elder people around-- mother, father, teachers, officers, etc. The child thus develops self-confidence and learns to meet, talk and behave properly and impressively. Nowhere should the child behave in a mean or insolent manner. The child who behaves in a sweet and decent manner wins the love and affection of everybody. The parents should seriously try that the child develops love of good company, curiosity to learn good things, and respect for discipline and good habits. The child should be induced to keep away from worthless play, crying, laughing, quarrelling, idle fun, greed, indulgence, envy, jealousy, etc., because these are all a waste of time and energy. In short, the child's training in manners should lead him/her to love, truth, good speech, honour, courage, happiness and generosity of heart.

This early programme may look too ambitious and unrealistic. But *Swamiji* insists that the earlier the foundations are laid in instinct and natural feelings, the stronger will be the later structure of character and competence.

### **Oral learning and writing:**

When the boy or the girl grows five years of age, he/she should be taught to write the alphabet of 'devanagari' script. He/she may also be taught the writing of other native and foreign languages. Then at this very early age the child should be made to learn hymns, shlokas, sutras, pieces of prose and verse, along with their meaning, on various themes of good manners - noble instructions, facts of knowledge, principles of *dharma*, God, and correct dealing with mother, father, brothers, sisters, friends, teachers, learned people, guests, ruler and officers, people in general and assistants, etc. These thoughts and ideas go deep into the subconscious and unconscious of the child as attitudes and values of the later age. Modern psychologists and educationists say that eighty percent of a person's attitudes and values are formed by the age of five.

### **Reason: No Superstition:**

Nothing is a greater enemy of reason and culture than superstition. Superstition inhibits free thinking, stifles discussion and argument, arrests the growth of mind and distorts our sense of truth and faith. Therefore, the children must be guarded against superstition. They should be encouraged to think for themselves and find out the truth. Keep everything open to reason and confirm the truth for yourself, says *Swamiji*. Truth never violates reason, nor does it ever distort *Dharma*. Reason, truth, faith and *Dharma*, in fact, are the same thing, they go together.

Catch them young in matters of reason, faith and *Dharma* so that they may learn to think and act freely and *Rightly* in their life.

### **Warning Against Superstition:**

The first warning is against the fear of ghosts. According to popular superstition, a ghost is the spirit of a dead person which captures and tortures a living person. *Swamiji* says that this is merely a fiction, a creation of weak and ignorant minds. He says that after a person dies, the soul takes another birth according to its actions good and evil. How can it stay back? Is it possible to violate the laws of God? Ignorant people who know neither science nor psychology nor medicine create phantoms of fear for themselves. In a state of high fever or in conditions of mental disease, a person mutters incoherent words and unconsciously starts talking of pictures recorded in the mind. Simple people believe that the patient has been captured by an evil spirit. Clever and selfish people cheat such gullible folk. Instead of medicine, they go round in search of magical formulae, amulets, etc. Clever people who claim to be masters of supernatural power exploit them and cheat them of their health, money and peace of mind. Such pretenders thrive on creating a fear complex. Parents should warn children against such fear and superstition and develop a scientific attitude in their mind from an early age.

Another superstition is the malevolence of planets. When somebody falls ill, again, instead of getting the *Right* treatment, the members of the family go to an astrologer or a 'tantrik' who is waiting for a victim. The pretender declares that such and such planet is angry and it must be appeased, otherwise the patient may even die. In this fear and mental crisis, the family offers to pay any price and make any sacrifice for the treatment. The pretenders make merry and enact all kinds of magical scenes to impress the victims. Such people deserve *outRight* rejection. Parents must

warn their children against such superstitions and, instead, create a rational and scientific attitude in them.

The next superstition is astrology and the popular horoscope. With his hard-hitting humour, *Swamiji* says that a horoscope is not a horoscope, it is, in fact, a sorrowscope. When a child is born, the parents immediately approach an astrologer and ask him to make a horoscope of the child's future. The astrologer tries his best to make money. He declares: "This child is very lucky. He is going to be very rich and win honour and prestige with social recognition and political power". The parents rejoice. But the astrologer pulls a long face and says: "Yes, the child is lucky, but one star is too bad. And for that reason, the child may die early". The horoscope instantly turns into a sorrowscope. The parents pray to the astrologer for rituals to counter the evil at any cost whatsoever. The astrologer has his day. The parents must warn the children against such forms of exploitation. We suffer or prosper according to our actions past and present. Our past continues to live in our present, and our present creates our future. The children must be told as early as possible that life is a field of action and our own actions make or mar our destiny. That is the law of life, that is the law of nature, that is the law of God.

*Swamiji* does not confuse astrology with astronomy. Astronomy is a science based on cosmic observation and mathematical calculation over ages past and present. It studies the movements of the stars and planets and predicts natural events such as eclipses long before they occur. Interplanetary travel too is based on astronomical calculations. But astrology is a superstition because it connects the movements of the stars and planets with the course of a person's life. We start believing that we are happy or unhappy because of our stars and not as a result of our actions. Children must be warned against this distorted view of life. They must be taught that we must act and do our duty freely and *Rightly* if we want to be happy and prosperous.

### **To sum up:**

*Swamiji* advises the parents and teachers to be alert and disciplined. Children are in trust with them, they must keep them alert and inculcate habits of discipline and hard work in them.

In addition to all these impostors, there are others, sorcerers, men of black magic and miraculous cures. They claim that they can cure ailments such as smallpox and typhoid with magic formulas, or they can prepare magical lotions for the death of enemies and exercise hypnotic power over the people loved or hated. The children should be warned against these too so that they can challenge the clever fellows: "Can you save your own people from death against the laws of nature and the results of *Karma*?" The impostors will be silenced. Give up all this nonsense, and respect those who are intelligent, virtuous and social benefactors.

### **Health Education:**

The children need health education too. Food and drink should be simple, nutritious, non-intoxicating and peace-giving. Eat as much as necessary, neither more nor less. At the *Right* age at an early stage, they should be given full knowledge of the value of vitality and health in life. They must be warned against the waste of vitality through early sex. Young people must preserve their vitality, because early and uncontrolled sex shortens life. Sex is for reproduction of life, it must not be confused with pleasure as an absolute value. Youth is nature's boon and it must not be thrown away because, once it is lost, it cannot be regained. Therefore, boys and girls of tender age, while they are students, should abstain from the temptations of exciting conversation and company misleading them to wasteful ways of living. Sex-education and sex-behaviour at the present time is permissive and unrealistic, and for this permissiveness our young people are suffering. *Swamiji* is not for compromise, he is not for permissiveness at all. Therefore parents and teachers should not be

funny and indulgent toward children in talk and behaviour. Love of the parents must not go counter to their health, education, welfare and character.

**Moral Education:**

Manners and morals are solid foundations of education and life. Children should be brought up in a cultured and morally elevating environment. They should learn good manners and virtuous ways from parents and the life and conduct around so that they keep away from stealing, sloth, non-seriousness, intoxication, lies, violence, cruelty, jealousy, indulgence, etc., and, instead, learn to live a life of truth and honour. They should know that once honour and character is lost, it cannot be easily reclaimed. There is nothing like a life of honour, virtue, truth, reliability and responsibility. Pride, ingratitude, deceit, falsehood, anger, disrespect, these make life disgusting even to one's own self. Therefore a person should learn to live a life of honour and virtue. And the parents should be the first and direct models to the children.

Parents ought to be models, but they too are human beings. And as human beings they may have certain weaknesses. So *Swamiji* strikes a very realistic note: Children should respect the elders, still the last word of advice from the parents and teachers to the children is this: Follow whatever is good in our life and conduct. But avoid all that which is not good, because the evil is evil anywhere and should be rejected.

Children are extensions of the parents and teachers. They should maintain and improve whatever is good and positive in the tradition and correct whatever is negative and unworthy. Education is thus the foundation of the good life and a means of the extension and renewal of tradition.

## CHAPTER 3

### Formal Education

*Swami Dayananda* was probably the first scholar educationist and reformer of the nineteenth century who said that *education is the fundamental birth right of every child, boy or girl.*

As such, *the education of every boy and girl is the fundamental duty of the parents and the state.* He says: It should be the custom of the community and a law of the state that all parents must send their children, boys as well as girls, to school at the age of five and latest by the age of eight, if a parent does not, the offence should be punishable according to the law.

*Swamiji* said it on the authority of the *Vedas* and *Manu*. *Manu* says in *Manusmriti* (7,152):

*Kanyanam sampradanam cha kumaranam cha rakshanam*

The health, education and protection of the boys and girls are the responsibility of the state. From the age of five or eight to the completion of education, boys and girls should study in residential schools. The schools for boys and girls must be separate, and during education there must not be any mixing of the sexes. The entire staff of boys schools should be male, and the staff of girls schools, female.

#### **Challenge to Orthodoxy:**

The idea of universal education for girls and the lower classes challenged the ideas and tradition of certain orthodox people who had their own vested interests. They raised a strong objection and quoted from certain books of tradition:

*Strishudrau nadhiyatamiti shrutih*

That is, 'women and *shudras* must not be educated'. *Swamiji* replied on the basis of the *Veda*, reason and justice (*YajurVeda*, 26, 2):

*Yathemam vacham kalyanim avadani janebhyah*

*Brahma-rajanyabhyam shudraya charyaya ca svaya charanaya ca.*

This is the voice of God: "I have revealed the blessed knowledge of eternal truth for the good of all the human beings equally for all--*Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*, for the masters as for the servants, for the highest and the lowest in position". *Swamiji* says that it is the commandment of God in the *Vedas* that the community as well as the state must educate everybody and spread knowledge for the welfare and progress of humanity. All evidence contrary to the *Vedas*, reason and justice is false. The word *Shudra* has no moral shades about it, it means one who, in spite of best efforts, fails to learn and remains ignorant. Women too have equal *Right* to education, and they should play their role equally with men in *Yajnas* and the social and professional fields including

even the field of battle. Why should they be deprived of education? Why should anybody be deprived??

**Admission and initiation:**

The child should be sent to school with initiation with the sacred thread and the *Gayatri mantra*. The *Gayatri mantra* with the three great *vyahritis* is the following:

*Om bhur bhuvah svah, tat savitur-varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.*

"The Lord is the lord of life and energy, He is the source and support of the universe. Self-existent creator of all, He is love itself and the dearest of all. Free of all pain and conflict, He blesses us all with joy. All pervasive, He is the sustenance of all. He is the lord creator, the power and the glory. Lord of light and giver of happiness, His is the glory worthy of our choice. That light and glory we worship. May we follow the path of goodness and Righteousness. May the lord inspire and bless us with His grace."

**Education: Life of Discipline:**

Life at school should be a life of discipline and hard study. *Swamiji* says: The students have to make a choice -- either of pleasure and comfort or of discipline and study. The lover of pleasure must give up study, and the lover of study must give up comfort. There is no choice between study and comfort, no compromise.

Life at school has to be a life of strong discipline. The students should keep away from the love of pleasure, comfort, sex and laziness. Even thoughts of the opposite sex, privacy, passionate stories, love-play of the imagination, all should be avoided. So the teachers should keep them deeply occupied with study, instruction, programmes in support of good nature and conduct, sports and proper recreation for the strength of body, mind and soul. The schools for boys and girls must be about six miles apart. Whether the student is a prince or a poor man's child, the clothes, food, living, furniture etc., everything should be equal for everybody. The discipline too must be equal for everybody. The students should be kept away from the worries of the home, so no contact with the parents should be allowed. When the students go out, they must be accompanied by the teachers. There is only one pursuit for them: study and the related activities as preparation for life.

If you are preparing for life, you have to sacrifice pleasure, passion and indulgence. Company of the non-serious and passionate friends, distractions, drink and drugs, early marriage, giving up interest in great books, indifference to *Vedas* and tradition, over-eating, over and untimely waking hours or sleep, casualness in study and preparation for examinations, use of unfair means, all this must go. Love of great literature, devotion to knowledge, dedication to discipline and celibacy in the interest of health and intellectual and professional growth, faith in God and purity of worship, respect for parents, teachers, saints and scholars, best use of time, all this is to be inculcated.

**The purpose of education:**

What is the object of education in life? Education is the process through which a person develops to full humanity. Education and not gold or diamond is the ornament of life. The purpose of education is to train the individual to live a full and planned corporate life for the achievement of peace, progress, prosperity and freedom in this world and hereafter. In other words, the purpose of education is to train the individual to live a life of *Dharma* and, through *Dharma*, to achieve *abhyudaya* (worldly fulfilment) and *nih'shreyas* (ultimate freedom). This means both existential fulfilment and essential freedom.

### **Education for *Dharma* and Truth:**

*Dharma* is practical living in accordance with truth. It is based on the *Veda*, the holy books of tradition written by the *Rishis*, the principles and examples of ethics and good conduct acceptable to reason, and the voice of conscience, and these are the bases of *Right* living. Education should be a training for obtaining the knowledge of truth and for living in accordance with that knowledge. All that is to be taught must first be tested as truth. Nothing that is not true should be taught. Knowledge means knowledge of things as they are and it covers everything, i.e., knowledge of nature (science), of humanity (the humanities), and of God (Divinity). Anything related to these three fields, broadly speaking, must first be tested whether it is true or not. If it is true, it should be accepted for study as well as for living, if it is not, it should be rejected. No complication, no compromises.

### **The Test of truth:**

Nothing should be accepted blindly. According to *Swamiji*, there are five grounds on which the truth of a thing ought to be tested:

1. If a thing is in accordance with the nature, character (qualities, attributes), and actions of God, and in conformity with the *Vedas*, it is true. If it is contrary, it is not true.
2. If something is in accordance with the laws of nature, it is true. If it is counter to the laws of nature, it is not true.
3. If the thing is in agreement with the words of the learned and the wise saints and sages, it is true, otherwise not. The words of these saints (*apta Purushas*) are authoritative.
4. If a word of knowledge or principle of conduct is in accordance with your own inner voice of the soul, it is true, otherwise not.
5. If something is tested on one of the eight logical grounds of testing and it stands the test as true, it is authentic, otherwise, if it fails in the test, it is false.

*Swamiji* gives these grounds of testing in brief from the first and second chapters of the *Nyaya Sutr*as of Kanada. These grounds are scientific:

- i. *Pratyaksha* or empirical observation: There should be nothing to disturb or block or distort your senses in this direct observation of truth.
- ii. *Anumana*: inference based on your direct experience and knowledge of reality.
- iii. *Upamana*: analogy or similarity in comparison with your previous knowledge of similar things.
- iv. *Shabda*: word of authority of the learned and the wise.
- v. *Aitihya*: example of someone great accepted as truth.
- vi. *Arthapatti*: implication of something true said in so many words.
- vii. *Sambhava*: probability of things as they are or as they generally happen.

viii. *Abhava* or non-existence: If something is not there and never has been, it is not true.

Based on these tests of truth, the programme of study should include the true knowledge of reality and the pursuit of that knowledge as value in practical life every day without fail. *Swamiji* quotes from Vaisheshika philosophy (1, 1, 4) which means:

“A person obtains salvation or absolute beatitude when he/she, purified by the practice of *Dharma*, masters the essential knowledge of the categories of reality (*padartha* or existence), with discrimination of their similarities and dissimilarities.”

The nature, property and behaviour of all the categories are to be studied in a scientific manner.

In brief, these categories of existence are:

1. *Dravya* (substance): Earth, water, light and heat, air, ether, time, space and direction, soul, and mind. These are the nine categories of substance.
2. *Guna* (qualities) : Which are 24: light/form, taste, smell, touch, sound, number, quantity, separation, cohesion, division, distance, nearness, understanding, pleasure, pain, desire, hate, effort, gravity, liquidity, viscosity, condition, virtue (property), vice (counter property).
3. *Karma* (motion): rising, falling, contraction, expansion, displacement (moving from one place to another).
4. *Samanya* (general): a substance which is the inherent cause of many effective forms, or a substance which is the effect of an inherent cause, is general as cause or as effect. Such causeness or the effectness is the generality.
5. *Vishesh* (particular): a specific quality or characteristic which is distinctive in relation to another is particularity. For example, among all *Brahmans*, *Brahman-hood* is a general characteristic; but in relation to the *Kshatriyas*, the same *Brahmanhood* is a particular characteristic.
6. *Samavaya* (inherence): The essential relation between a pot and clay, part and whole, substance and property, is permanent. This is inherence.

The other kind of relation is *Sanyoga* (association) which is neither essential nor permanent.

Thus a person should know through scientific and rational study the various categories of reality and the properties and behaviour of various substances from *Prakriti* (nature) to God. And he/she should pursue this study on the basis as well as in continuation of authority and tradition. He should make a distinction between the real and the unreal, the true and the false, the permanent and the transitory, the real and eternal values and the passing phases of temptation, *Right* and *wrong*, virtue and vice, *Dharma* and *adharma*, reality and illusion, knowledge and ignorance, the constant and the variable.

#### ***The Pre-requisites:***

It is expected that when the child comes to school, his *investiture with the sacred thread (Janu)* has been performed. If it has not been performed, it is performed at school. If it has been performed, it is repeated at school as a mark of admission. The sacred thread means faith in God, reverence for the academic tradition of the *Rishis*, and commitment to the family line.

Another requisite is *cleanliness of the body, mind and soul*. The child should know the methods of cleansing: you clean the body with water, you clean the mind with truth of conduct, you clean the intellect with knowledge of truth, you clean the soul with a vision of reality and discipline in life. If a child has not opted for study and discipline over ease and comfort, the school is the wrong place for him. There is no compromise.

With a mind open and alert, the learner ought to have an attitude of surrender and service to the teachers and the seniors. The reward is fourfold: good health, long age, knowledge, and honour in society.

The learners have to rise early and finish their daily bath, say their prayers, perform havan, pay respects to the teachers, help in hospitality to the visiting scholars and *Sanyasis*, and observe proper discipline of social and personal ethics, i.e. *yamas* and *niyamas*, which are the first two basic steps of the yogic way of life. There is no holiday, no let up, in the discipline of conduct and study. Study for the learner is like food in family life.

The rules of social ethics (*yamas*) are five, and the rules of personal ethics (*niyamas*) too are five:

***Social Ethics:***

*Ahinsa* (love and non-violence), *satya* (truth of conduct in thought, word and deed), *asteya* (respect for others Rights and property with no thought of stealing whatsoever), *Brahmacharya* (preservation of vitality and totally abstaining from sex), and *aparigraha* (no greed and grabbing but living on the bare necessary needs of life).

***Personal Ethics:***

*Shaucha* (cleanliness both physical and mental), *santosha* (contentment and peace at heart), *tapa* (austere discipline of body and mind), *swadhyaya* (study of the self and good books), and *Ishwara-pranidhana* (faith in God).

***Methodology:***

The method of study and teaching is that of learning, teaching, discussion, and practical living at the same time. It is a method of lecture (i.e., personal face to face interaction between the student and the teacher), and self-study by the student. It is mutual teaching and learning through discussion of the themes of the subject of study while the same theme is also pursued in actual living in the school. Education thus is both an intellectual pursuit and a moral discipline for life.

*The themes and subjects* are both given from the *Taittiriyanopanishad* (7, 9):

"Let them together study and discuss: *Ritam*, the law of life and the universe, and observe the discipline in this life; *Satyam*, the true reality of life and the whole creation, and pursue truth in life; *Tapa*, the austere and exacting discipline of life and society, and observe it; *Dama*, control of the senses, and practice it too; *Shama*, peace and balance of mind with practical observance of it; *Agnaya*, various kinds of heat and energy including electricity and light, and test and apply the same for practical uses; *Agnihotra*, various kinds of *Yajnas* in which heat and energy are tested in experiments for application; *laws of hospitality* with actual service to the visitors; *Humanities*, with practice of the same in school organization and associations; *Praja*, that is, social management of the people with practical training; *Prajanam*, that is, the art of family planning and population control and welfare; *Prajati*, or man-power planning and social services.

These are the themes of life and study which have to be learnt and lived at school by mutual interaction between the teachers and the students. For this purpose the teachers also have to be good scholars and noble human beings committed to the well-being of students and the common progressive good of society. In short: Talk, discuss, study, learn, and live the various aspects and phases of life and society.

***The programme/course of study:***

The programme of study is related to the 100 year plan of life. The first twenty five years of life are called *Brahmacharya Ashram*, or the period of preparation. During this period the learner should observe celibacy in order to develop and conserve his/her physical and mental energy. It is important for the learner's physical, moral and spiritual growth toward maturity as an individual and as a citizen. From the age of five to the age of twenty five, the programme covers about twenty years. Of course, flexibility is to be allowed because the potential and capacity of all the students is not the same. Moreover, different students may pursue different degrees and combinations of subject specialization: research and teaching (*Brahmana*), defence and administration (*Kshatriya*), industry, trade and agriculture (*Vaishya*). There would always be those who are far behind and will have to find work as assistants and helpers (*Shudra*), but the road is still open for them to go forward if and whenever they can. Life is life, after all, it is realistic as well as hard, but the opportunities are many-open for everyone without discrimination.

**The details of the programme are:**

1. *Shiksha*, or the basic sounds and phonetics:  
Speech mechanism, organs of speech, place and effort of articulation;
2. Grammar: The *Ashtadhyayi* of *Panini* with full explanation of the sutras and applications, first study;
3. *Dhatupatha* or the list of classified verb-roots with their meanings.
4. *Unadi Sutras*;
5. *Panini's Ashtadhyayi*, second detailed study; reading 1½ years
6. *Patanjali's Mahabhashyam* 1½ years  
This covers the structure of words and syntax and the interpretation of texts in the *Right* manner.
7. *Nighantu*, and *Nirukta* of *Yaska*;
8. *Pingala's Chhandograntha* on metre and versification 1 year
9. *Manusmriti*, *Valamiki's Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata* with special reference to *Niti*, i.e., the principles of practical life. 1 year
10. Six treatises of *Darshan* philosophy - *Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Mimansa*, and *Vedanta*, provided that
11. The ten *Upanishads* to precede the *Vedanta* 2 Years
12. The four *Vedas* (*Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*) with the four *Brahmana* works (*Aitareya*, *Shatapatha*, *Sama* and *Gopatha*) 6 Years

This is the graduation programme. There is special emphasis on grammar, i.e., phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics. The reason is that unless you know the real and authentic meaning of words, you are lost in the sound of words. If a person knows only words, but does not know the meaning and the thing for which the word and the meaning stand, he is just like a beast of burden who carries a weight of gold without knowing what it is. *Swamiji* states the semantic triangle on the basis of the *Veda*, *Sanskrit Grammar* and *Darshan* philosophy: We must know the word (*sabda*), meaning (*artha*) and the thing in reality (*Vastu*).

Then follows the specialized programme:

13. Medicine and surgery ( <i>Ayur-Veda</i> )	4 years
14. State-craft ( <i>Dhanur-Veda</i> )	
i) Governance (including defence)	2 years
ii) Social organization and administration, and public welfare	2 years
15. Music and dance and other arts ( <i>Gandharva-Veda</i> )	
16. Science and technology ( <i>Artha-Veda</i> )	
17. Astronomy, Geology and Environment ( <i>Jyotish</i> )	
18. Technology of industry and instrumentation ( <i>Yantrakala</i> )	2 years

The whole programme (general and special) should cover about 20 years with such adjustments as might be needed in individual cases.

### **The graduation:**

On the completion of the programme follows the graduation ceremony (convocation). On this occasion the graduate offers homage to the teachers, and the head of the institution charges the graduate that ever in life and conduct, he/she would prove worthy of the education received in the institution. The words are from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (7, 11) and speak of the quality and conduct of the finished product, the educated person:

"Speak the truth. Observe *Dharma*. Neglect not study. Maintain the family line. Neglect not the truths of life and conduct. Neglect not the duties of piety. Neglect not the matters of welfare. Neglect not health, the expertise, the values and the welfare of the home. Neglect not discourse and the study of good books. Neglect not acts of service to the parents and the learned. Reverence the mother. Reverence the father. Reverence the teacher. Honour the visiting guest. Perform all the noble and virtuous acts, not otherwise. Follow our good actions, not others. Welcome and maintain the company of the learned and the wise in faith. Give in charity with faith. Give even if you have no faith. Give with grace. Give with modesty. Give even for fear. Give to keep a promise and word of honour. If you are ever in doubt about an act or decision or feeling, follow the ways and examples of persons who are wise, impartial, faithful, uninvolved, gentle and pious. Do as they do. This is the command, this is the teaching, this is the *Veda* and *Upanishad*. This is the discipline, this is the way."

For study, *Swamiji* recommends the four *Vedas* in the original and the works of the *Rishis*. The *Vedas* are the divine word revealed at the dawn of creation. Hence they are eternal (*nitya*) and pure knowledge. There is no history in the *Vedas* as *Swamiji* says in the seventh chapter of *Satyarth Prakash*. The later works of the *Rishis* are authentic expressions of their vision of the *Vedas* and their first hand experience of the external as well as of the internal world of the mind and spirit. The *Rishis* had no axe to grind, hence their works are true. And yet, while the *Vedas* are acceptable as

primary authority unconditionally, the works of the *Rishis* are accepted as authority secondarily and conditionally, that is, as far as they are in agreement with the *Vedas*. Nothing contrary to the *Vedas* is acceptable. All other works are excluded from the course of study. (The principle of truth and authenticity applies to all modern works also.)

We can understand this view of the course with reference to the concept of pure knowledge (*vidya/science*) and applied science (*avidya*). Pure science is constant knowledge which does not change with time and place. But applied knowledge changes with time and place according to need. Historical knowledge changes because it has a lot of personal and local element. *Swamiji* divides knowledge into two categories:

1. Knowledge of the constants in existence which are God, soul and nature, the laws of nature, and values such as truth, goodness, beauty, love, service, etc.
2. Knowledge of the changing phases of nature in the environment and society, and of the forms in which the constant values of life are to be realized.

The knowledge of the constants is constant, and the knowledge of the phases and states of change is changing. Therefore, the purpose of education being the good life in the world and ultimate freedom, the *Right* knowledge to have first is the knowledge which is permanent. Why spend basic time and prime energy on knowledge which changes from day to day.

Knowledge of the eternal facts, laws and values gives us the *Right* sense of values and *Right* attitudes for our practical life. Our responses, decisions and actions are guided by our basic values and attitudes. Life and environment is constantly changing. So knowledge of the changing forms of environment and the strategies and methods of dealing with them cannot be final and exhaustive. At the best we can give the learner an open-ended blueprint of the possibilities of methods and solutions. Still the very core and foundation of these various possibilities shall have to be the laws of nature (including human nature) and the eternal human values.

The problems of change in society and the environment are problems of management. In the field of management, technological, social, economic, political and other problems call for their own solutions. A ready-made formula cannot always meet the need. Therefore in the field of management and administration -- what *Swamiji* would call the field of specialization -- a learner can be trained *generally* in principles and techniques of method and not specifically. And these generalities are part of the permanent laws of life. Thus basic knowledge and basic training is the primary thing. People fail in management not because they lack knowledge of the changing facts but because they fail in their basic attitudes and basic values in response to change.

Of course, *Swamiji* includes science and technology, social sciences, industry, art and arChitecture, economics, etc. in the list of special subjects. Anyone who has to deal with the governance and administration of society has to manage these changes. And for this management, a person would need basic knowledge of the changes applicable to his/her situation. This knowledge too would have to change and develop according to the situation. This knowledge is not permanent, it is knowledge changing with the changing conditions. It has to be pursued with an open mind. But we ought to realize here too that the grounds of this changing knowledge will have to be certain basic and permanent values which we search for through our changing policies, rules and modalities.

To appreciate *Swamiji's* idea of the distinction between the eternal knowledge and changing knowledge, therefore, we should distinguish between the eternal realities and the changing forms

and shifting stages of their interaction. The essential knowledge of existence is knowledge of the uninvolved eternal (God), the involved eternal (Soul), and the variable eternal (*Prakriti*). The distinction between the constant and the variable is the real knowledge which is wisdom, Viveka. A meaningful programme of study should have Viveka as its end and purpose. Anything not pointing to that would be spurious even though it might be necessary under certain circumstances. The knowledge of the eternal is *Vidya*, and the knowledge of the variable is *A-Vidya*. Both are essential to successful and meaningful living. For this reason, probably, *Swamiji* begins the Ninth Chapter of ***Satyarth Prakash*** with the need for both *Vidya* knowledge of the eternal, and *Avidya*, knowledge and management of the changing in action.

# CHAPTER 4

## Marriage and Family Life

If *Brahmacharya* is the foundation of life, *Grihastha*--marriage, family and the home--is the centre-pin of society. *Swamiji* quotes from Manu (3, 77-9): Just as the streams and rivers find their rest and haven in the ocean, just as all living forms receive their breath from the air, so do all the other three orders of society (*Brahmacharis*, *Vanaprasthis* and *Sanyasis*) find their strength and support from the house-hold order (*Grihasthashram*). If *Grihasthashram* were not there, the others would fall apart without the life-support. Therefore if a person wants to live a noble life of happiness and fulfilment, and at the end of it achieve the ultimate freedom of *Moksha*, he/she should marry and settle in a happy home to raise a family and support the community. *Grihastha* indeed is the first and foremost '*ashram*' of all the four. The partners in marriage should maintain the sanctity of the couple and the family. Indeed, the nation is an extension of the family, and the home is the measure of the nation's honour and pride.

### **Marriage:**

On completion of education and preparation for a career during *Brahmacharyashram*, a person should marry a partner agreeable in nature, character, behaviour, culture, manners, habits, education and qualifications.

### **The age for marriage:**

What is the *Right* age for marriage? For girls, 16-24, and for boys, 25-35, even upto 40-48 provided that the man has observed complete celibacy. *Swamiji* quotes from *Sushruta*, an ancient authority on the biology of the human system, that a wife of less than 16 years and a husband of less than twenty-five are not mature enough to beget a healthy child.

The girl should be from outside the '*Gotra*' or clan of the father and not from within the six generations of the mother's family. This genetic distance is necessary between the male and the female partners of marriage. It is in the interest of the health of the off-spring through what we may regard as crossbreeding. Nearness and familiarity of the parties is not desirable for social and economic reasons too. Unfamiliarity creates its own distance, and distance brings its own charm.

The boy should be educated, cultured and proficient, youthful and mature, and a handsome personality with pleasing manners. The girl too should be equally mature, educated, cultured and efficient. Avoid a girl who is anaemic, physically disproportionate like an Amazon or a mini-doll, and select one with smart and proportionate limbs, graceful in movement, having a soft body, fine glossy hair and fine teeth. The point of all this is that each partner should be agreeable, pleasing and graceful, otherwise the marriage could be full of strain and might even fail. *Swamiji* is categorical on the comparable and harmonious merits and qualities of the nature, character and behaviour of the boy and the girl intending to marry. Again, he quotes from Manu: "Even though a boy or a girl has to remain unmarried throughout life, an unequal marriage should never be allowed."

### **Arranged Marriages:**

*What about arranged marriages?* Who selects the partner, the boy/girl concerned or the parents?

It is the *Right* of the boy and the girl intending to marry to select his/her partner. Even if the parents decide to arrange the marriage of their son or daughter, they should never select the partner without the positive and happy consent of the boy or the girl concerned. If a boy and girl happily agree to marry, the marriage is likely to be happy with no strain and quarrels. And in a happy home the children too are likely to be happy and promising. The fact of the matter is that, in marriage, the parties concerned are the boy and the girl, not the parents, directly. It is the married partners who have to face the consequences of the union. Therefore, they have the *Right* to choose the partner, primarily. Marriage should be a happy union of two equal partners for life as it used to be in olden days, a matter of '*Swayamwar*' and not a matter of business arrangement.

Still, marriage is not a matter of *senSations* nor of excitement, it is a serious matter of understanding, appreciation and judgment in addition to, of course, an agreeable personality and pleasing manners for life-time love and loyalty. Therefore the choosing parties should know the do's and don'ts of the situation. *Swamiji* says that a bride or bridegroom should not be selected from those families which have no decent manners and perform no *Righteous* acts, who neglect the study of the *Vedas* and have long and thick hair on the body, and families which suffer from diseases such as piles, tuberculosis, asthma, bron*Chitis*, epilepsy, leprosy and dyspepsia, etc. These are hereditary diseases and are communicated from one family to another through marriage partners.

Subject to discretion and judgement, '*Swayamwar*' is the key to a happy marriage, a happy marriage is the secret of a happy home, and a happy home is the unit of a happy nation. Happiness, good fortune, honour and fame dwell in the home in which the wife is happy with the husband, and the husband is happy with the wife. Poverty, misery and reproach overtake the family where discord and quarrels rule the home. As long as the people were married by the choice of the parties, the country continued to progress happily. But when this practice was replaced by early and arranged marriages of unequal and ill-educated boys and girls, the country went down the road. Therefore, marriage should be performed with the choice of the parties concerned, the partners being similar in nature, character and behaviour with no conflict of *Varna* and social obligations of the *Varna* (class and profession).

### **Varna and Caste:**

*Varna* is not caste, nor is it, as is sometimes thought, the colour of skin. It is the professional identity of a person. *Varna* is also not hereditary. It is a class of society which pursues a particular profession within the socio-economic organization of that society. It is freely available to a person on the basis of merit. According to the *Vedas* and *Manu*, the society is divided into four classes on the basis of its socio-economic needs:

1. *Brahmanas*: the intellectuals, teachers and researchers;
2. *Kshatriyas*: the organizers, administrators and defence services;
3. *Vaishyas*: the class managing production and distribution through agriculture and industry;
4. *Shudras*: the class which, for want of education and professional training, assists the others with manual labour.

Really speaking, these four are even to-day the broad socio-economic divisions of any society. But in India, each one was further divided and subdivided into groups. Then each group got bound into a *Rigid* cast-iron mould so that, instead of merit and choice, heredity became the basis of choice. *Varna* degenerated into a *Rigid* caste-system which has now overtaken the country even politically -

- the caste is asserting and acting as an organized pressure-group in the politics of the country. Caste is now becoming a political class.

*Swami Dayananda* challenged the caste system and the hereditary basis of *Varna*. He declared on the authority of the *Vedas* and *Manu* that *Varna* was a socio-economic class determined by merit and choice in the economic and social organization of the country for proper and efficient management of the society. A person could freely move from one *Varna* to another according to merit - the quality of mind (*Guna*), competence and capacity to work (*Karma*), and the nature and character of his/her personality (*Svabhava*). His debate with the orthodox ignoramus is interesting:

**Question:** Is the son of *Brahmana* parents not a *Brahmana*? Can the son of non-*Brahmana* parents ever be a *Brahmana*?

**Answer:** The son of *Brahmana* parents may not necessarily be a *Brahmana*. Many of non-*Brahmana* parentage have been *Brahmanas* and *Rishis*. The sage *Jabala* was the son of obscure parentage, *Vishwamitra* was born of *Kshatriya* parents, and *Matanga* was born of low class parents. Even today, a man of good nature and education may deserve to be a *Brahmana*, and a stupid person deserves to be a *Shudra* even though he might be the son of *Brahmana* parents.

**Question:** A *Brahmana* child is born of the blood of *Brahmana* parents. How can the blood and body of one *Varna* change to another *Varna*?

**Answer:** A *Brahmana* is not merely a body of flesh and blood. A *Brahmana* is a person shaped and matured through hard discipline, persistent and intelligent study of the *Vedas*, performance of *Yajnas* and great sacrifices, dedication to teachers and service of saints and sages. He must live a life of truth and virtue and raise a pious and virtuous family (*Manu*, 2, 28). Don't you see that the child of a good father can be evil, and the child of an evil father can be good? *Manu* says (4,178) that children should follow the good footsteps of their noble ancestors but not the evil acts of the ignoble ones. Further, can there be a more forceful statement of the change of *Varna* than this: If a person born of a low class family attains the virtues, habits and tendencies of the *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya* or *Vaishya* class, he/she should be classed with them according to merit. On the contrary, if a person born of a *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya* or *Vaishya* family goes down to the nature, character and habits of a lower class, he/ she should be classed with the lower class (*Manu*, 10, 65).

**Question:** But how can you deny or ignore *Yajur-Veda* (31, 11) which says: The *Brahmana* was born of the mouth of God, *Kshatriya* from the arms, *Vaishya* from the thighs and *Shudra* from the feet? Just as the mouth shall be mouth, and all other parts remain what they are, similarly each *Varna* shall be itself, it can't change to an other.

**Answer:** None can challenge the *Veda*, but any intelligent person can challenge you. The *mantra* does not mean what you say. It means this: In the Lord's created humanity, the class which is like the mouth, foremost in speech, thought and understanding, that is *Brahmana*. The class that is like the arms, strong and powerful to defend, that is *Kshatriya*. The one who travels as if by virtue of the strength of the thighs in the country or abroad and trades there is *Vaishya*; and that class which is ignorant, is like the feet, the lowest part of the body, that is *Shudra*. In plain words, just as the mouth is the best of all the organs, so are the *Brahmans* by virtue of their knowledge and character but if they neglect their merit and their functions, they forgo their position too. In short, the men and women of a nation should be classed as *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* or *Shudra* according to merit and their social function open to choice.

The *Apastambha Sutras* too say that *Righteous* conduct raises a person of lower order to the higher order, and *unRighteous* conduct degrades a person to a lower order. Thus *Vedas* and *Shastras* prescribe social and economic classification by merit, and they also prescribe preservation of the order as well as upward and downward movement of class by merit.

*Varna* is thus by *Karma* and not by birth. It may be birth and *Karma* both, but it is not by birth alone. And *Varna* is not caste.

Thus when education and preparation for a career in a profession is complete, young men and women should join in wedlock by choice, with full understanding and agreement of each other's nature, character and behaviour, and settle in their proper *Varna*. They can be assisted by their parents and their teachers.

How can the parents, and specially the teachers help? *Swamiji* makes a suggestion: "When the time of marriage approaches, say a year or six months before the completion of education and training, the photographs of the bachelors should be sent to the heads of girls' schools and of the maids to the heads of boys' schools. Their bio-data upto date should be obtained for comparing their merits, temper and habits. When their nature, character and habits agree, the photographs and bio-data should be handed over to the parties concerned. The boy and the girl should also meet, and the teachers and the parents also should meet to know the parties and to have thorough discussion on the relevant matters. There should be no reservations or confidentialities on matters of mutual interest. When the parties agree to marry, the marriage may be celebrated in the school itself or at the bride's house, after the completion of education. The teachers and parents are counsellors only, and the schools are counsellors as well as data banks. The persons to decide are the boy and the girl.

### **Man woman relations:**

A happy home is a paradise on earth. "Where women are respected, there all inmates live a happy and virtuous life. Marriage is a sacred institution. It is a sacrament, not a live-in association of convenience, not a socio-economic contract, not a biological interdependence merely. It is an integration of two body-mind-soul existences into one duad, i.e., two-in-one. The husband and the wife share each other's mind and heart, trans-living each other's individuality. When the man and the woman decide to marry, they decide to surrender their individuality to join into a union which is something greater than the aggregate of the two. *Swamiji* describes this union in matter-of-fact language which everyone should seriously understand : "When a man and a woman get married, the man 'sells' himself to the wife, and the woman 'sells' herself to the husband", which means that all ideas, emotions, ambitions, interests, etc., of each are subject to the other's. Neither of them should do anything without the active consent and happiness of the other. Love, courtesy, fidelity, and dedication, this is essential for a happy marriage. Disagreeable behaviour, immoral conduct and extra-marital relations vitiate the marriage and destroy the home.

The foundation of marriage is not sex. It is *Dharma* which means both existential fulfilment and ultimate freedom. Sex in the *Vaidic* tradition has been sublimated to *Kama*, *Kama* elevated to worldly fulfilment, and worldly fulfilment terminates in *Dharma* and *Moksha*. Therefore we believe in the sanctification of marriage as a sacrament and the consecration of woman as the mother. For this reason, we have, in Indian tradition, the deification of the child which is the highest fruit of the flower of human love. Therefore, *Swamiji* says: Keep the woman happy. The breath of a woman's happiness blesses the home to a very paradise, while a sigh of pain sings it to a desert of hell.

In modern societies, specially in advanced countries, we have broken marriages, fractured homes slowly destroyed, and neglected, abused and deserted children. We have unmarried mothers,

absconding fathers, teenage pregnancies and tortured parents. Only because we are desecrating sex, vulgarizing marriage and destroying marital fidelity in search of thrill and individual freedom. *Swamiji* would make no compromise with this individual freedom and permissiveness. For him, the child is sacred and inherits the *Rights* of happiness, education and settlement from the parents and society by the virtue of its birth. We must listen to the child crying: Where are my fundamental *Rights*?

The two-in-one duad, the duad and the child family, the family and the holy abode, the happy home—that is the happy unit of a prosperous nation. Violate this unit with internal conflict or external indiscretion, and the family is broken, even the nation may feel shaken and ashamed.

*Swamiji* is categorical on the unity and fidelity of the family and the harmonious diversity of the role of the wife and the husband. The wife should manage the home, the husband should manage the outside affairs, and both should work in harmony with mutual confidence. The woman too may work outside, but all the same she cannot neglect the children, she being the mistress of the home. Love, fidelity and mutual confidence of the two as one is the rule of the family. The details may be worked out by the partners.

*Swamiji* talks of family life and husband-wife relations on the principles of *dharma*, justice and rectitude. But accidents too are part of life. If the husband dies or deserts the wife or is disabled, both the wife and the family come to face a desperate situation, a crisis. What can the woman do? What should the family do if the family line faces a closure as happened in the *Mahabharata* on the death of Shantanu's son *ViChitravirya*?

*Swamiji's* answer is natural, reasonable and realistic. If the husband dies, or the wife dies, a person may stay as a widow or widower without marrying again if he/she is strong enough. Still nature is nature. A person, specially at a young age, may not be able to have that degree of self-control. In such a case, if the man or the widow has no children, he/she may marry again. He says so on the authority of the *Veda* and *Manu*: "You have lost your husband, O woman, accept the situation. Select another man as your life companion" (*RgVeda*, 10, 18, 8). This other man is called '*Devara*', second husband. This man can be her former husband's younger or elder brother or some other man of her own or higher *Varna*. Further authority is *RgVeda*, 10, 85, 40 and *Manu* 9, 69. The provision of second marriage applies to both man and woman. The evil of suttee was absolutely unwarranted by the scriptures.

In the situation of a crisis, there is another provision, that of *Niyoga*. *Niyoga* is a temporary functional union of a man and woman of the family for the specific purpose of begetting an heir for the family. A man or a woman in a critical situation can have a union with social permission exactly as the society permits and recognizes marriage. The union is over when the purpose has been served with the birth of a child. But this relationship is strictly for a child, beyond that purpose this relationship must not last. This relationship, again, is not for the purpose of sexual *Satisfaction*. The *Niyoga* of *Ambika* and *Ambalika* with *Vyasa* in the *Mahabharata* is the example. *Vyasa* came on invitation, met the women and left.

*Niyoga* is generally not accepted by many people even though widow remarriage accepted. It is generally regarded and criticized as adultery. If this kind of criticism is carried to the extreme, then marriage itself can be condemned as violation of virginity and re-marriage as adultery. But if marriage and re-marriage are accepted, *Niyoga* too *can* be accepted. And we can go further: We accept artificial insemination and we accept surrogate mother and surrogate father through the sperm bank. *Niyoga* is a similar provision within the family without the bank and the laboratory. And the

discipline and self control required in a *Niyoga* situation is more exacting than in that of marriage and second marriage. Moreover, *Niyoga* is not a commandment, it is a provision and a permission, and it is a permission only if you feel there is a crisis in the family and you search for a solution from within. If you don't wish to invoke the provision, there is no compulsion.

Never violate the house-hold values of life, violation means invitation to moral and spiritual death. *Dharma*, truth, justice, love, service, compassion, these are the values. Help the poor and the needy, honour your obligations to God through prayer, and to the environment through *Yajna*, avoid pollution, and work for cleanliness, be good to the seniors, parents, teachers, the learned and the wise, the visitors and the *Sanyasis* and serve them with grace.

The house-hold duties are five:

1. *Brahma Yajna*: Daily prayer every morning and evening;
2. *Deva Yajna*: Havan *Yajna* twice a day morning and evening;
3. *Pitri Yajna*: Service and hospitality to the living parents, the learned people, seniors, saints and sages.
4. *Atithi Yajna*: Hospitality to the visitors; and
5. *Balivaishva-deva Yajna*: feeding of birds and animals.

Control your senses, keep your mind clear, focus on your obligations and be firm and free. Guard yourself against the hypocrite, the greedy grabber, the crafty deceiver, the babbler and the boaster, the back stabber, the dissembler, the revenger, the rapacious and the obstinate. In short, keep your vision of values and *dharmas* clear and never fault on duty because, ultimately, even your body is not your own. What are your own is your soul and your *Dharma*. In *Grihastha*, observe your *Dharma* jointly as the duad and also singly as partners of the duad. And when you have played your part, call it a day and retire.

# CHAPTER 5

## Retirement and Renunciation

### *Vanaprastha:*

Having lived a full family life of love, fidelity and pious observance of duty as a house holder, the man should call it a day at the ripe age of fifty, especially when a grand child has arrived. The wife may choose to live with him or stay back with the children. The affairs of the family are taken over by the next generation.

Where does he go, having left the home? He retires to a forest abode in a grove of trees where he has to live with nature. He carries nothing of his elaborate wardrobe if he had one, nor any load of sumptuous foods. He carries only what he needs in order to perform the daily *Yajna*, because, even in the forest, he has to observe the five daily rituals of prayer, havan, hospitality, reverence to the learned and service to the environment, birds and beasts. His status is only that of a 'forester' - - that is what a *Vanaprasthi* is, a dweller in the forest. He lives on what he gets and devotes himself to study and teaching.

Let us consider something practical: These days, the forests are under attack. They are generally bare and denuded. There was a time when human population was limited and the natural environment, vast and rich. So there were numerous abodes and schools run by the forest-retirees and maintained by the society. But these days things are changed. The character of the forest is changed, the nature of forest produce is changed, and the form of the maintenance of senior people and services such as education is changed. So what could we now understand by retirement according to *Swami Dayananda's* views?

The first thing is management of the generation gap willingly and gracefully by the younger and the older generations. The older generation retires, leaving the affairs to the younger generation, and the younger generation takes over all the responsibilities of life and society including the maintenance of the retired people. While the retirement is voluntary and graceful, the maintenance too has to be equally honourable. On the ethics of retirement *Swamiji* says: "The retired man is a man of love and compassion, living a life of austerity with self control and minimum personal needs. He should keep himself busy in study and teaching, taking nothing from anybody." It means that retired life should be a life of independence, self-respect and voluntary service to the community. The younger generation should make it possible.

How does one plan one's retirement? First, as a householder, he should plan his family in such a manner that, before his retirement, his children are properly settled so that he can relinquish all the responsibilities of the home to the next generation. He thus retires without liabilities. During retirement, all the time he gives freely without taking anything in return. *Swamiji* says in the next chapter of *Satyarth Prakash* that the state should arrange for life-time pension of both husband and wife in the case of government servants retiring from service. The implication is that the retired man is a responsibility of the state or of the community so that he gets the maintenance without embarrassment, or, where the state or community is not that advanced, the person concerned joins a pension scheme during his working time. To sum up:

1. The generation gap should be recognized. The old generation should yield the place to the younger generation, having prepared it for the responsibility.
2. The community/state is responsible for the maintenance of the retired.
3. The working man should plan his family and finances in a manner that he can have an honourable retired life of voluntary service to the community.
4. The maintenance of the retired people should be so provided that they neither have to ask for it and feel embarrassed, nor do they have to regret the day of retirement.

***Sanyas, Universal Citizenship:***

Next comes the life of total renunciation, *Sanyas*. *Sanyas* is the last phase, the fourth quarter from 75 to 100 years. However, if a person is disposed to take up the orders at the end of *Brahmacharya* or *Grihastha*, he can if he feels strongly motivated.

*Sanyas* is the phase of total freedom and uninvolvedness. During the other phases there could be certain compulsions and involvements under pressure and necessity but, for a *Sanyasi*, there is none, and if someone wants to tempt, placate and corrupt him, the *Sanyasi* must spurn him *Right* away. Clean shaven, with the mendicant's staff and bowl, he wanders around in light ochre robes only to spread the light of truth, and do the *Right*. Having passed through the stage of self-preparation, social participation and social service, he is now dedicated to divine service, doing good to all without any discrimination at all. No compromise, only truth, *Dharma* and universal good in the service of God. This is the phase of God-realization to complete the journey without fear or regret.

However, if his senses are not in control, if his mind is still agitated, if his soul is not at peace with itself, then even knowledge cannot help him to attain God. Therefore, having received knowledge through education, and experience through living a full life, he should want nothing more of worldly nature. He is now wholly for others. Having no desire for himself, he is no burden to anybody except that it is the privilege of others to maintain him. He can receive gifts of food and clothes at the minimum as required. He can also receive gifts of what is required for his universal mission, and of course he has to receive shelter wherever he stays for a day or for a longer time during his work, but he can have nothing to hoard. Thus having everything and wanting nothing, he is the lord over all including himself and walks under the shadow of God, ultimately to join Him.

What about the ethics of *Sanyas*? The *Sanyasi* should have control over his thoughts, words and actions and spend all his time and energy in social service and meditation. He should conquer all fear and hatred and the pride of knowledge and spiritual achievement. He is free from all forms of ritual, so he should dedicate himself to truth, love, compassion, non-violence, knowledge and *Dharma*. The pursuit of *Yoga* should be his daily discipline and the observance of *dharma*, his daily routine.

And what is *Dharma*? *Swamiji* quotes Manu to describe the ten principles of *dharma* for all, and that is *dharma* for the *Sanyasi* too: Patience of mind and steadiness of belief and habit so that agitation does not afflict him; forgiveness and tolerance; discipline of the ego; respect for other's *Rights* and property; cleanliness of body and mind; control of the senses and mind; control of intelligence over emotion and passion; knowledge of reality beyond illusion; truth of thought, word, and action, and control over hate and anger, these are the ten principles of *dharma*.

If a person does not follow the principles of *dharma* but moves about in ochre robes, he is not a *Sanyasi*, he is a pretender. A true *Sanyasi* follows and preaches *dharma* and truth at all cost. *Swamiji* explodes certain superstitions about *Sanyas*: It is said that a *Sanyasi* must not do anything because he is just a recluse. Nonsense, says *Swamiji*. If a *Sanyasi* doesn't spread the message of truth, knowledge and *dharma*, he is only a burden on the earth. And just as no eye or ear or mind is redundant, so no person is useless. The *Sanyasi* is a venerable member of society, he too must do his part.

*Swami Dayananda* thus rehabilitates the retired people in modern society: The society should maintain the retired people, they are a social asset as well as responsibility. The elderly people should retire willingly and gracefully and do voluntary service selflessly and, by example, propagate truth and *dharma* without fear and compulsion.

The retired people are indeed an asset and societies are still unable to tap.

# CHAPTER 6

## Government and Administration

*"Self-government is the best government"*, wrote *Swami Dayananda* in chapter 8 of *Satyarth Prakash*: "Howsoever just, kind and impartial a foreign government might be, it can never give full happiness to its subjects." In *Aryabhivinaya* (Book of Prayer), he prayed : "Lord of the Universe, give us the strength and energy, courage and will, knowledge, patience and political intelligence so that we may be free of foreign rule and no foreign power may ever rule over us again". Any foreign government, according to him, means only suffering and misery for the people it governs--any people, any government on the earth.

A foreign government cannot and will not rule for the good of the people, it will rule only for itself and the good of its parent country. A foreign government thrives on the division and exploitation of the people for the simple reason that it is not a government of the people, by the people, for the people. There is no substitute for self-government.

*Who constitutes the government of a free country?* *Swamiji* says that it is the people who are the authority behind the government, and it is the people-and-the-government who rule the country in cooperation and interdependence.

*His idea of a self-governing country or nation is Vidatha*, a systemic organization of *the people and the government* for the purpose of *Dharma*: which is the protection and advancement of the freedom, welfare, happiness, knowledge and education, justice, exercise of the *Rights* and duties of all, individually and collectively, in a state of freedom from poverty, ignorance and injustice.

The government exists for the people, for the exercise of their collective *Dharma*, the exercise of the *Rights-and-duties* of the people individually and collectively. The purpose of the government is the protection and advancement of the people's freedom, happiness and welfare with knowledge and education, the rule of law for justice, security and peace, and economic well-being. All suffering arises from ignorance, injustice and poverty. If a government cannot guarantee for the people freedom from poverty, ignorance, fear and injustice, and if it cannot create the environment in which they can freely exercise their *Rights* and fully perform their duties, it has no *Right* to exist.

*The fundamental rights* in a free country then are the *Right* to education, to justice and good government, to economic security, good health and an honourable existence. The fundamental freedoms are academic, political and economic, and the freedom for the pursuit of a profession according to one's merit and qualifications. Those who fail to qualify for an academic, administrative or economic profession have the *Right* to work in the ancillary services. But *Rights* and freedoms are not absolute: *Discipline is the condition of freedom, rights are contingent on duties, and duties are incumbent on rights*. In *Vaidic* language, *Rights* and duties, freedom and discipline, are two sides of the same coin, *Dharma*. Every person has the *Right* to his or her *dharma* and has the duty to observe the same *dharma*. Quoting from *Manu* (8, 15-16) *Swamiji* says, "Observance of *Dharma* is the breath of life, violation of *dharma* is violence against life itself. Therefore no person should ever violate *dharma*. The socio-political discipline of the systemic organization of a people is *Raj-dharma*. *Swamiji* discusses *Raj-dharma* in detail in the sixth chapter of *Satyarth Prakash*.

**The Institution & constitution:**

The people and the government are partners in *Raj-dharma*. How do the people go about the institution and constitution of the government?

*Swamiji* quotes *Atharva-veda* 6, 98,1 and *Yajurveda* 9, 40 to say that the political system of a community, nation and indeed of the whole humanity is *Jana-Rajya*, the governance and government of the people. The head of the system is '*Raja*', which means not 'The king', but *the ruler*, the president of the country. *The Atharva-veda* says:

"All ye men and women (of the country/the world), elect and appoint that person as the ruler and president who can do you proud, defeat the enemies and never let the country down in any conflict. Elect one who can shine as the first among rulers, one who by merit and virtue deserves to be the president, one who commands the love, affection, respect, reverence and spontaneous admiration and obedience of all, one you would love to meet and call upon in the hour of need."

The ruler's is not a hereditary office, it is elective, and only one who possesses merit and virtue of an exceptional order is worthy of election. *Swamiji* is thus for a presidential form of government.

**World government:**

The boundaries of a government need not end at the borders of the country. Depending on the will and the political culture of the people of a country and the countries of the world, these can extend up to the globe. *Swamiji* dreamt of a day when the people of the world would unite under one umbrella--one people, one government, one law, one constitution, one political culture, one raj and one *raj dharma*. Translating *Yajurveda* (9, 40) he says:

Ye citizens and members of the governments of the world, join together, consult together, and with wisdom, knowledge, humility, expertise, and impartiality, elect and jointly accept this president as the supreme head of all the rulers and nations of the world for the institution and constitution of a world government, a great common-wealth of the peoples of the world for the establishment of a happy, prosperous and glorious order of humanity free from all conflict and violence.

This is *Swami Dayananda's* vision of one world, one government, one humanity, one international family of nations -- close to half a century before the world thought of the League of Nations after it had suffered the disaster of World War I.

**Government and Governance: Organismic structure:**

*Swamiji* extends and elevates the idea of political organization to that of political family and political organism. He says:

"The ruler and his government should provide all conditions of happiness for the people just as they do for their children. The people too should regard the ruler and the members of the government as their protectors and guardians. It is a fact that the real rulers are the farmers and the workers while the ruler is their protector and guardian. If there were no people, the ruler would not be there, and if the ruler were not there, where would the people be? Both are interdependent and complementary. Both are free in their respective spheres, and both are mutually conditioned in the common areas of activity and interests. The ruler should never

violate the general will of the people, and the people and the officers of the government too should not disobey the orders of the ruler".

While writing about the strength of the people, *Swamiji* says that the people are the very body and life breath of the country and the government:

"Just as the breath and vitality of a living being is weakened if the body is subjected to starvation, similarly the strength and vitality of the government too goes down if the people are subjected to deprivation.. The ruler and the government, and even their families, friends and relatives cannot survive without the people and their well-being."

*Swamiji's* concept of the body-politic thus is based on the *Purusha* Sukta of *Yajur-veda* (31) which describes the world as an organism, and the human organization as an organismic paradigm of it. The body-politic-- whether it is one country or the whole world--as an organization is a family. In its working and relationships, it is a *purusha*, a living organism.

### ***Structure of the Government?***

Who forms the government? *Swamiji* says on the authority of *Rig-Veda* (3, 38, 6) that the people and the ruler together should form the government and appoint three councils:

1. The Council of Education (*Vidyarya Sabha*),
2. The Council of *Dharma*, i.e., Law and Legislation (*Dharmarya Sabha*) and
3. The Council of Governance and Administration (*Rajarya Sabha*).

As is implied by the names of the councils, the *Vidyarya Sabha* should look after the matters of education--policy, content of education, establishment of schools, colleges, and universities, and educational administration. The *Dharmarya Sabha* should look after the enactment of laws, courts, and the proper observance of law and order. The *Rajarya Sabha* should look after governance and administration, rules and regulations of administration and the observance of *Rights* and duties. In addition to the *Sabhas* (councils), *Samitis* can be appointed which act like committees for specific purposes. For example, there can be, and should be, a Defence *Samiti* which should comprise defence experts who should look after military training and matters of defence. The president should be the head of the *Sabhas* and the *Samitis* and the supreme commander of the armed forces. Each *Sabha* should have a chairman and the people should observe the laws of the state under the authority of the *Raj Sabha*. (Which would comprise all the three *Sabha* with the President as the Head.)

*Swamiji* is specific and clear on checks and balances, although in the limited space of *Satyarth Prakash* he makes general observations only. The *Sabhas* should be responsible to the head of the state, that is, the President. The President should be responsible to the *Sabha* which should, by implication, consist of all the three *Sabhas* (which we may call *Maha-Sabha* or the Great Council). Finally, the President and the *Sabhas* should be responsible to the people and the people should observe the laws of the state under the authority of the *Raj-Sabha*. Thus, we can see that the ultimate authority of the nation and the state is the people. In other words, the government is representative of the people, it is appointed by the people and it works for the people. If it fails to work for the people for any reason, it forfeits the *Right* and power to govern and deserves to be removed.

The procedure for checks and balances has to be worked out in the constitution. For example, in the American constitution, the President can be impeached by the Congress for high crime, and in India, a government can be dismissed by the President. The President should administer an oath of office and discipline to every chairman (*Mukhya Sabhasad*) and to every member of the *Sabhas*

(*Sabhasad*) with the charge (*ajna* or commandment) that he or she shall observe the discipline of the *Sabha* and discharge his/her duty to the constitution and the people.

*Swamiji* gives strong reasons for the checks and balances. We know the modern dictum: Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The point and purpose of checks and balances is that no one should be given absolute power to rule. He quotes from *Shatapatha Brahmana* (13, 2, 3, 7-8):

"If the ruling class were absolutely free, they would observe no limits of power and freedom, they would enter deep into the country and destroy the people. For the same reason, an absolute ruler goes mad and destroys the people. He tortures and eats up his subjects. Therefore no one person or power in the state should be absolute. Just as the lion, king of the forest, brooks no other in his domain, so an absolute ruler allows none else to excel, and just as the lion kills and eats up the healthy animals, so does the ruler live upon the wealth and property of the people. He frames laws only to extort money and thrives like a predator upon the people."

This must not be allowed by any self-respecting self-governing society. Therefore *Swamiji* says that the head of a state should be a person of high values and character, and on him/her too and on the ruling class there must be constitutional checks to balance the interests of the people and the powers of the government.

Apart from the constitutional checks and balances of the *Rights* and powers of the government and the people, a clear line of demarcation should be provided between the *Rights* and freedoms of the people in their field of life and economy *and* the areas where the powers of the government will operate. There must be a line drawn by law between the privacy and private *Rights* of the individual *and* the public interests of the community, society and the state. In the strictly personal field of the individual, the individual should be free and independent, but beyond that field, he should be subject to the law. Similarly the field of operation of the powers of the government should be defined so that the government can govern without interference. By implication, the powers and duties, and the degree of freedom to take decision and operate, of every official also should be defined by law. The details of the general principle of freedom to act *and* respect for powers and duties should be worked out according to the needs of the time. Neither the individual nor the government is sacrosanct and absolute. Both are participants in the life of the organismic system of the human family.

Whatever the constitution and principles of governance, the life of the society and the success of the constitution will depend upon the working of it by the persons concerned. And the performance of the persons will depend upon their character and sense of responsibility. That's why it is said: '*Yatha raja tatha praja*', i.e., as the ruler, so the ruled. The people follow the rulers, because, generally speaking, they set the standards of practical life. Therefore the best guarantee of good government and good life is to put the *Right* people in the *Right* place. According to *Swamiji*, the higher the office, the greater the requirement of character, competence and performance of the officer.

### **The Ruler/President:**

Kind of person should the President be? Inwardly a *Brahmana*, outwardly a *Kshatriya*, a person with the ideas, attitudes and values of a sage, but with the competence, will and performance of a ruler, dedicated wholly, exclusively and necessarily to the protection and advancement of his country through clean, spotless and transparent administration conducted with the spontaneous assistance and cooperation of all the institutions and officials concerned.

***For the President, there is nothing private***, nothing secret; everything is fair, open and above board. For him, the private is public and the public is private. To insist on private life is to court disaster, because every public eye is focused on him. To insist and protest that even the President has a private life means that he is a Dadaelus trying to fly to the sun with waxen wings. Therefore, in addition to being acceptable as the first among people worthy of leadership, the President must continue to deserve and hold the same position throughout life. He must not fall for sex, nor to passion and anger. Self-controlled and personally disciplined, he must be a monogamist, clean and faithful in conjugal life, pious and devoted to God, practising meditation and study, living according to a definite programme of daily life, alert and punctual in personal participation, inspection, supervision and command of state affairs as required from day to day.

### **Members of the Councils:**

The members of the Council of Education should be persons of exceptional knowledge and education. The members of the Council of *Dharma* (law and judiciary) should be persons who command the knowledge of *Dharma*, *Dharma Shastras* and jurisprudence. The members of the Council of Governance and Administration should be persons who are dedicated to the highest values of life in their conduct and behaviour. Each head of council, the commander of the armed forces, the head of administration, the chief justice, and the president of the state, all should be persons of high education, knowledge and character, of inviolable integrity, unassailable honesty, and incorruptible purpose. Above all, the President should command the magnificence and power of *Indra* (Electricity), love and inspiring affection of *Vayu*(Air), impartiality and rectitude of Yama (justice), the light and illumination of *Surya* (Sun), the power to eliminate evil and darkness as *Agni* (Fire), the force to contain and bind the wrong doers as *Varuna* (Lord of Chains), the beneficence to bless the people with happiness as *Chandra* (Moon), the prosperity and wealth of *Kubera* (Lord of Wealth). What is just mythology elsewhere in world-tradition and literature, *Swami Dayananda* translates into the language of life and organizational reality of society.

### **The officers:**

No one can work and survive by one's sole self. Even the highest authority requires others to stand by and assist. The ruler has to appoint officers of the state such as the Prime Minister, other ministers, secretaries of various departments, ambassadors, officers of the administrative services external and internal, finance and judicial services, etc. All these officers should be intelligent, alert, self-confident, fearless, and well-educated in the *Vedas*, and the works of traditional scholars, saints and sages. They should know the state of their professional art and the tactics of their job. *Swamiji* insists on their knowledge because, without the knowledge of history, tradition and the present state of affairs against the background of eternal values, a person cannot do justice to his country and its people.

### **National Security:**

*Swamiji* writes on the ethics and tactics of war and external relations for the defence of the country. He writes on how to plan and build the capital city, the president's house and the administrative offices. We know that no details on such matters can be final and exhaustive, because the world has advanced too far with the passage of more than a century since *Swamiji* wrote. But the basics with which *Swamiji* is concerned are relevant not only for the present time but also for the future. His concern about security, defence, intelligence, national honour, mutual respect and cooperation in international relations, the principles of tactics in war time, the caution in political negotiation, the fairness, clearness and transparency of internal administration, the need for patience and confidentiality in situations of national gravity -- all these are of permanent concern and value. The

persons in position have to work out their own methods of work as they face the situation and come to their own decision.

### **Decision Making:**

No decision has to be arbitrary. Unless otherwise provided by law, every decision must be taken by majority. But majority does not mean violation of quality, it implies decision by majority as well as decision by quality specially because the quality and qualifications of the people working in positions and on councils and committees are set high. Still, by way of caution, *Swamiji* says that the opinion and decision of a single man of knowledge and wisdom may be better than the opinion and clamour of a thousand fools. This observation implies that in a critical situation where there are serious and conscientious differences between the majority and the minority, or even between a council or committee and the chairman, the chairman could be empowered with something like veto-power which, of course, should be exercised not arbitrarily but with reasons.

### **Pyramidic Decentralization:**

*Swamiji* says that the administrative organization of the country should be Pyramidic from the ground to the top. The basic administrative unit is the village, the units rise higher and higher: ten, twenty, hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, and one hundred thousand. In every unit there should be an office with an officer with relevant powers. The lowest and the local officer in the village is the Pradhan and the highest power is the *Raj Sabha* and the President. The powers and functions of the various officers at the different levels have to be decided by law. This is *Swamiji's* view of basic, direct and grass - root democracy. Now that the villages are growing to towns and towns are growing to cities, the basic unit may be the village in the case of a village and a ward in the case of towns and cities. In every case, the head of the lower unit should report the state of things in his unit to the higher officer until the line of communication is complete to the top of the pyramid.

### **National, Zonal and International Governance:**

*Swamiji* does not close the structure of administration with the government of the country. He carries it to the international world and closes it with one world government. There should be regional units of government with the joint cooperation of national governments managed by regional *Sabhas*, each presided over by the regional president. Finally there should be a world government managed by *Maha-Raj-Sabha*, the world council presided over by the President elected by the representatives of various national governments, of course, on merit. This vision of *Swami Dayananda* envisaging a single, coherent, cooperative world order is based on the *Vaidic* vision of a world free of fear, conflict, violence, and waste of human and natural resources at the cost of human freedom and welfare.

### **The Purpose of Governance:**

What is the purpose of political organization at the national and the international level? It is vital human social economy, *yoga* and *kshema*, i.e., to create and produce what is wanted, to guard and protect what is created and produced, to increase what is protected and guarded, and to use what is increased for the advancement of knowledge, the advancement of the good life lived according to *Dharma*, and the maintenance and advancement of the students, the missionaries of truth and charity, and the weaker sections of the community so that all may be happy and healthy to follow the path of truth and goodness. The aim of any government should be the welfare of the people, their health, education, employment and pension, in order to help everybody to achieve the four basic aims of life - pursuit of *dharma*, material well-being, existential fulfilment, and ultimately the total

freedom from bondage of all sorts. Nor should the government concentrate only on human welfare. Nations and mankind must protect the environment and preserve wild life. We are destroying the eco-system in the pursuit of science, technology and power, and with that power we have built up a volcano which can explode any moment even by accident. We have created fear out of our power and we are forgetting ourselves and our God in the thrill of that power in spite of fear. *Swamiji* warns: Enough! No more of this fearful power. Be positive, be creative, create happiness, not disaster. The aim of power is security, peace, prosperity and happiness.

*Swamiji's* basis for the warning as well as his exhortation to do our best individually and collectively is the *Vaidic* vision: *Vayam Prajapateh praja abhuma* (We are all children of God). God is our father and the creator of the world. God is also the father of nature and all the life it sustains. The universal law of nature is in operation without any suspension or let up, without any fear or favour. If we err and go astray, we provoke the law of nature and we will have to face the consequences, whatever they be. Therefore, *Swamiji* says, let our government be a participative human agent of the laws of God and His purpose on earth. Let us be obedient, faithful, helpful, cooperative, creative, good, with all confidence. Let us not relent out of sloth or selfishness. Let us too, like nature, be ever active and constantly watchful.

### **Law in operation:**

The word for operative law is *Danda*, the sceptre of authority wielded by the head of state. The rule of law is the soul of the socio-political system. If the ruler fails to keep the rule of law in operation, the system slackens and dies, and with that dies the ruler too. Also, if the ruler fails to exercise the authority vested in him/her, with justice, impartiality and understanding, then too the system is crippled and consequently the ruler too goes down. The ruler's power is an obligation beyond measure and pleasure. He/she must discharge it and call it a day with whatever the *Sabha* grants for his/her maintenance. The ruler is a functionary - a servant, not the master, of the system which comprises the people, the nation, the state, and more because the system participates in the law of God. And, of course, he is great because, as head of the people, the nation and the government, he wields the *Danda*, the sceptre of authority. *Yatha Raja tatha praja*: as the ruler, so the ruled. If the ruler is great, the people feel proud and emulate him. If he falls, the people feel sad and hurt. The whole nation feels the shame. In a critical situation like this, the people must rise, sacrifice the individual and save the nation and the system (*Dharma*).

### **The Eternal and the temporal values:**

In the context of modern political theory and practice with reference to the political systems and organizations, the reader might feel that *Swamiji* draws too much on ancient authorities, the *Vedas* and *Manusmriti*, etc. It is true. But we have to appreciate and understand the reasons, because in any case we can't escape them. *Swamiji* says that the *Vedas* are the voice of eternity, expression of universal knowledge and values, pure knowledge of reality from nature to God, free from the fluctuations and relativities of history, time and place. They are a record of clairvoyant vision. The *Smritis* are the works of saints and sages who were men of genius free from personal colour. But *Swamiji* says that the laws of human society should be based on eternal values (*Vedas*), guided by the wisdom of the sages, and in addition, framed in the light of the tradition and history of a society and the circumstances of time and place including the genius of the people. According to *Swamiji*, then, the constitution and law of a country should not be a local reaction to historical circumstances, but conceived and structured in the widest perspective for the people it is intended to govern. The fundamental values and principles of a constitution should be eternal, the forms, structures and institutions to realize them should be in character with the people, while the goals should be in

accordance with the values, traditions, ambitions and aspirations of the people. And this would mean conceiving and realizing the eternal in the medium of the temporal.

*Swamiji* was *Right*: His perspective was universal, his horizon was global, and his thought and action was comprehensive, integrated with the universal.

# CHAPTER 7

## God, Soul and Revelation

**God is One:** The sages call the same One by many names (*RigVeda* 1, 164, 46): This is the subject *Swami* Dayanand has dealt with in the opening chapter of *Satyarth Prakash*.

The one essential and absolute name for God is Aum (usually written as Om). All other names describe God's powers and attributes. But because of many names, and also for the reason that the sacred books speak of many '*devas*' and '*devatas*', many people believe that there is not just one God but many. And many people worship these many gods. In chapter VII, *Swamiji* takes up the nature and unity of God and the question of the *Vedas* and Revelation.

God is the one Supreme omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent spirit where-in all time and space, suns and stars and planets, all the living beings and non-living things find their abode. Those who know Him, believe and worship Him, find joy and ultimate peace. Those who don't are unfortunate and miserable. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. He exists before the world comes into being and he remains when it recedes into the state of annihilation (*Pralaya*).

God is one, existent, intelligent and blissful, formless, omnipotent, just and merciful, unborn, unending, unchangeable, without beginning, incomparable, lord and sustainer of all, omnipresent, omniscient, unaging, immortal, fearless, eternal, pure, and creator of the universe. He alone is to be worshipped. This is a summary of the nature and attributes of God according to principle no.2 of the *Arya Samaj*.

### **One or Many?**

God is one: This immediately raises a question: In the Indian tradition there are many gods, thirty three *devatas*, and they are worshipped too.

*Swamiji's* reply is: In the entire text of the four *Vedas*, nowhere is it said that God is more than one. On the other hand it is clearly said that God is one, and that one alone is to be worshipped. For example:

*Hiranyagarbhah samavarttatagre bhutasya jatah patir-eka asit.*  
(*Yajur-Veda* 13, 4)

The origin of creation and lord of all that was and is and shall be is one. He alone is to be worshipped. That one is the God of gods, i.e., the lord of all the '*devas*' or '*devatas*'.

### **Thirty three Devatas:**

*Devatas* are powers which have special and exceptional qualities, and for those qualities they have to be valued, loved, revered. The *Shatapatha Brahmana* says that there are thirty-three *devatas*. These are:

1. 8 *Vasus* - earth, water, fire, air, space, moon, sun and stars. They are called *Vasus* because they are the abode and support of life;

2. 11 *Rudras* - the ten *Pranas* or vital energies and one soul. These are called *Rudras* because when they leave the body, they cause sorrow and people weep in mourning;
3. 12 *Adityas* - the twelve months of the year are *Adityas* because they count up and thus exhaust everybody's life span;
4. One *Indra*, which is electric energy of the world and a great source of power;
5. One *Prajapati*, which is *Yajna*, the creative power of the universe which sustains life and its supports.

These are the thirty-three givers of life, and above these is the one lord creator and ruler of all these and the universe. That one is to be worshipped. This is what the *Shatapatha Brahmana* says.

### **What is the proof:**

Okay, but the one question of all the questions is: Can you prove the existence of God? By direct proof (*Pratyaksha*) you cannot, because direct proof means clear proof by direct sense perception, and God is not an object of perception. If there is no direct proof, there cannot be inference either, nor any other proof such as authority. Then how can you say God is?

*Swamiji's* reply is logical: With direct perception you can know the properties of a thing, not the thing itself. With the experience of the properties, you can infer the thing which possesses those properties. Similarly you see this wonderful creation. You naturally infer that there must be a creator. That creator is God. Further, whenever in our mind, there is a tendency to do something evil, immediately there is a questioning and a warning from within. That questioning and warning is the voice of God. Still further, when a person purifies his or her soul of all darkness and evil, he/she can have a direct internal experience of the presence of God. Thus there is direct experience of God, and also there is not. The direct experience is only for the *yogis* from within, not for all. But the indirect experience is for all, and that is through a direct vision of His wonderful creation. *Swamiji* goes into details of the proofs of God's existence given by different works of *Darshan* philosophy, *Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Mimansa* and *Vedanta*, to show that *Darshan* philosophy proves the existence of God.

### **The question of Avatar (Incarnation):**

Another important question, extremely popular, is: Does God appear in human form as an incarnation (*Avatar*), as many people believe He does, as in the form of Krishna or Rama? Lord Krishna himself says in the *Gita* (4, 7): As the state and practice of *Dharma* goes down under the forces of evil, then to counter the evil, I incarnate myself. Can we disbelieve the words of Lord Krishna?

*Swamiji's* reply is bold and clear: He says that these words, if they mean what you say they do, are counter to the *Vedas*. Hence they do not mean what they are said to mean. The *Yajur-Veda* (40, 8) says that God is *akayam*, i.e., He does not take a body-form, and He is free from the bonds and weaknesses of body. He has no form, nor a likeness (*pratima*). He has no hands, no feet (*apanipada*), nor does He use any tools for creation. He is formless, and a universal presence.

But the words of Lord Krishna can be understood: Lord Krishna was a superhuman hero of his time and he did destroy the forces of evil. All the same he was human, and the human soul transmigrates from one body to another. So if lord Krishna wants to say that, committed as he was to *Dharma*, he (the great soul) takes birth in order to counter the forces of *adharma*, then he means well. On our

own, we may refer to *Swamiji's* own words about himself. *Swamiji* said he was not too keen for *Moksha*, indeed he wanted to take birth again and again to serve and enlighten mankind to follow the Right path of *Dharma*. Lord Krishna was a great man, and great men are for the good of others. In fact, some of the scholars of *Shrimad Bhagawat*, the famous purana which celebrates the avatar of Lord Krishna, are of the same view. Ram Chandra Dongre, for example, in his commentary on the *Bhagawat* says that God does not come on earth as avatar but, of course, there are avatari *Purushas*, that is, persons with godly qualities. This is understandable, because Rama and Krishna were such heroic figures. The *Padma Purana* says that Rama means 'The universal spirit of the universe with which the *yogis* merge in *samadhi*, the spirit which is Parama *Brahma*, existent, intelligent and blissful.' The Rama that is worshipped is not the son of Dashratha, it is a name of the only one universal formless all-pervasive God. This discussion is needed to clarify the faithful position of those who do not worship God in any material personal form. They are not atheists, their faith is real, their worship is genuine.

God is formless and omnipresent. If he were not so, he would not be omniscient either, nor omnipotent. A spirit which is confined to a body is limited in its presence and power. It is also subject to bodily needs such as food and drink. It is subject to suffering and feelings and emotions. It is subject to the law of *Karma* also. But the *Yoga* philosophy says that God is free from *Karma* and the fruits of *Karma* (1, 24), unlike human beings. Further, if God were to appear in human form, the world outside the form would be void of his presence. How would the world go on then?

Can the infinite ever come into a womb? Think even of `Akash' (space). Everything else is contained in space. How can space then be contained in a small part of it? And God transcends space too because space itself is contained in the infinite presence of God. How can we imagine then that God can come into the womb of a mother? God is the great womb (*Hiranyagarbha*) of the universe. God is the mother, the father, the creator, of the universe. He is eternal, unborn, unaging, undying. God never is born in human or any other form. All those human beings who are regarded as incarnations were human, very very great, indeed worthy of the highest reverence, still they were human.

**Another Question:** Doesn't God take human form in order to destroy evil? How would demons such as Ravana or Kansa be destroyed if God were not to appear in human form? *Swamiji* replies: Everyone who is born must die, that's the law of life and nature. What is Ravana or Kansa compared to the infinite might of God who creates, sustains and destroys this universe? Before the mighty forces of nature at God's command, the fiercest demons are like ants, nothing more. Evil is destroyed according to the laws of existence by the reason of its own behaviour. Every evil person carries the seeds of destruction within, that's the law of God. God doesn't have to take up arms as a warrior.

**Still another question:** Does God forgive the sins of his devotees? This question implies another: Is God just and merciful, both? God is just and merciful both, but he does not forgive the sins. If God were to forgive the sins of his devotees, everyone would sin without fear. Suppose a ruler were to forgive his subjects and not punish them for their crimes. In that case crime would rule and law and order would be impossible. No system can work like this. Crime and sin call for punishment. If the devotee prays for forgiveness, the prayer means that the devotee would avoid further sins and thus would be saved. But the fruits of actions already done have to be endured, and suffering for a devotee means moral education. Justice and mercy, in fact, are two sides of the same coin and both are meant to serve the same purpose. The purpose of both is to save people from sin and crime. If crime is forgiven with mercy, justice is violated, because mercy for the criminal means injustice to the victim. So both mercy and justice serve the same one purpose of saving people from sin and suffering. The real mercy of God is this that He has created a wonderful world of beauty, plenty and happiness with the law that everyone gets the reward or punishment for the actions done. And this

world of wonder and beauty is for all living beings, freely available. Anyone who tries gets it in accordance with his or her performance.

### ***Nirguna and Saguna:***

In sacred literature, it is said that God is *Nirguna* and *Nishkriya* by which terms some people understand that God is void of qualities and he doesn't do anything. This way of thinking is not correct, says *Swami Dayananda*. If God were a non-doer, how could He create, maintain and wind up the universe. So God is the supreme power and doer of the highest acts. Of course, whatever He does is done for the living beings, nothing for himself personally. God is also not void of qualities and attributes. *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* says that there is nothing He cannot do. He needs no tools to do what He does. Nothing is equal to Him, nothing is more or higher than He. His knowledge, power and performance is infinite. He is existent, intelligent and blissful, and since He is intelligent, there is thought and will in Him. With His power, thought and will, He creates the universe and inspires nature with an inbuilt law, He being at the centre in the circle and beyond the circumference of it if there be any circumference of His creation. He being at the centre, the entire space is His magnetic field, and things in that field happen according to an inbuilt cosmic computer, the programme being instant, continuous and complete at the same time. God is not a non-doer, nor void of qualities and characteristics.

How to understand the term '*Nirguna*' ? To understand this we have to understand the term '*Saguna*' also. That which has qualities is '*Saguna*', i.e., with *gunas*. That which does not have qualities is '*Nirguna*', i.e., without *gunas*. God is both *Saguna* and *Nirguna*. Matter, for example, has form but not awareness. Intelligence (*Chetana*) has awareness but no form. So things have certain qualities, and do not have certain other qualities. God has infinite knowledge, power and bliss, so He is *Saguna*; He does not have form (which is the quality of matter), nor hate, jealousy, etc., (which are qualities of *jiva*), so He is *Nirguna* too. It is wrong to say, as some people say, that God is *Saguna* in the form of *Avatara*, and *Nirguna* as *Nirakara*, formless.

### **Worship: Saguna and Nirguna:**

Here another question arises regarding worship. We have *Saguna* worship as well as *Nirguna* worship. According to *Swamiji* it is wrong to say that the worship of God in human form is *Saguna* worship and the worship of the formless God is *Nirguna* worship. God is formless, therefore worship of a form is against the *Vaidic* way. So when you meditate on the qualities of God such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, love, grace, justice etc., that is *Saguna* worship. And when you worship God as free of ignorance, form, taste, smell, hate, jealousy, etc., that is *Nirguna* worship.

Worship is threefold: *Stuti*, that is, the praise and celebration of the greatness and infinity of God's kindness, justice and grace; *prarthana*, that is, prayer that God may bless us with virtues such as knowledge, love and kindness, strength of character, and gratitude, in short, freedom from illusion, ignorance and fear, so that when we have completed our journey, we may attain *Moksha*; *upasana*, that is, meditation on the presence of God, to be with Him and like Him. However, we must know and remember that God gives us the fruits of success in worship only through us. For example, if we pray for health and wealth, we must observe the discipline of health in our habits, and try to develop our competence in work and business management. If we just repeat the words of prayer and do nothing more, prayer will be meaningless and fruitless. To be honest, prayer must be joined to *Karma* (action). Moreover, if you pray that God may give you the wealth of the entire world, render all others poor, and destroy your enemies, you are a victim of self-delusion. Your whole being must be involved with prayer, you must have love for all and faith in the father of all, and do your duty.

Prayer works with God and God works through nature and your heart. God loves his children, but they cannot cheat him- even with prayer.

Therefore, *Swamiji* says that in order to be honest and successful in worship, we should practise *Yoga* through the progressive steps of *Ashtanga yoga* as set out by Maharshi Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras*. In order to meditate on God, we should first practise a clean life of social and personal ethics (*Yamas* and *Niyamas*). *Yamas* are love and non-violence, truth, honesty and respect for others' Rights and property, celibacy and respect for the other sex, and reducing your wants to the minimum. *Niyamas* are cleanliness and purity of heart, contentment, austerity, study, and faith in God with total self-surrender. This is the foundation of the other six steps of *Yoga*. Then in *samadhi* you see, inwardly in your soul, God face to face and exclaim in ecstasy: "That is that! this thou art! this is me!"

### **God and Jiva:**

And now we come to a priceless question: Is *jiva* the same as God, or a spark of God, or a different entity from God? One view specially of the Neo-Vedantis is that God (*Brahma*) and *jiva* are one and the same. *Swamiji* says they are two and distinct, their relation being that of pervader (God) and the pervaded (*Jiva*), the worshipper (*jiva*) and the worshipped (God).

*Swamiji* says that God is *Sat* (existent), *Chit* (intelligent), and *Ananda* (blissful). He is, in fact, the supreme and infinite existence, intelligence and bliss. *Jiva* is existent, intelligent and blissful, but its intelligence and bliss are limited. While God is infinite, *Jiva* is finite. But while the limitation is a real condition and essential part of the nature of *jiva* according to *Swamiji*, the limitation and condition, even the name *jiva*, is an illusion and super-imposition according to the Neo-Vedantis. The Neo-Vedantis' position is *advaita*, the identity of *jiva* and *Brahma*. *Swamiji's* position is *dvaita*, the duality of the two. *Swamiji* analyses the Neo-Vedantis' position and works out the eternal reality, to two, even according to them: *Brahma* and ignorance (*avidya*, which is eternal according to them). *Brahma*, the absolute, gets involved with ignorance (*avidya* or *maya*), say, The Neo-Vedantis, and under that illusion feels that the one reality has exploded into many forms. This is untenable, says *Swamiji's*. His argument is that the Absolute *Brahma* cannot succumb to *Avidya* and get involved into illusion against His omniscience. He says that *Brahma* and *Ishwara* are one and the same, *jiva* is a distinctive reality, and *Maya* is *Prakriti* (nature) as the *Upanishad* says. *Brahma/Ishwara*, *Jiva*, and *Prakriti* are the three eternal, according to *Swamiji*.

The confusion and misunderstanding arises from a wrong interpretation of such quotations from sacred literature as: *Aham Brahmasmi* which is interpreted as *I am Brahma*. *Tat-tvam-asi* interpreted as *Thou art that (Brahma)*. *Ayam-atma Brahma* interpreted as *This soul, jiva, is Brahma*. *Swamiji* examines these interpretations. He says that a literal interpretation of these expressions would be wrong: these are figurative expressions of a state of ecstasy in *samadhi*. *Aham Brahmasmi* means "I am with *Brahma*, we are together, indistinct, one." When a *jiva* elevates its nature, character and performance to a state similar to the nature, character and awareness of God, it can say that it is one with God, which means that the *jiva* in that state is *similar* to God, but *not the same* as God. Similarly *Swamiji* interprets the other quotations. The term *advaita* also means the non-duality of God, not the non-duality of God and *jiva*. It means that there is no second God, it does not mean that God and *jiva* are one and the same. If this interpretation is accepted, then there is no difficulty in accepting the two terms *Dvaita* (duality) and *Advaita* (non-duality). *Dvaita* applies to God and *jiva*, and *Advaita* applies to God alone. God and *jiva* are two, God is one and only one.

### ***Does God know the future?***

The question is superfluous. Past, present and future are divisions of time for the *jiva* because *jiva* lives in time and in limited material form. But God does not exist in time, time exists in God. God's awareness of existence is simultaneous, therefore for God nothing happens as it does for man. His knowledge is constant and eternal, the same ever, not growing from moment to moment.

*Still, why doesn't God stop man from doing evil?* Well, He warns man against evil through His voice in the conscience, but He doesn't hold his hand because the *jiva* is free in will and action. Okay, but then can *jiva* do anything it likes? No, it cannot go against the laws of nature. Within the laws of nature, the *jiva* has the freedom of will and choice and the freedom to do its best to achieve what it wants. All the same its power is limited.

### **Now the Vedas and Revelation:**

*Vedas* are eternal knowledge of existence, the knowledge of God, nature, the soul and society. They are four: *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*. These were revealed to four sages at the dawn of creation, in original *Sanskrit*. The *Atharva-Veda* says (10, 23, 4, 20):

*Yasmad richo apatakshan yajur yasmad-apAkashan.  
Samani yasya lomany-atharvangiraso mukham.*

"Lord God is He who revealed the *Rig-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*."

God reveals the *Vedas* at the very dawn of creation. God is the first and the eternal guru of all. The *Yoga-sutras* of Patanjali say:

*Purvasham-api guruh kalenanavacchedat (1, 26).*

The Lord is the teacher of the earliest teachers among mankind because He is eternal, not subject to time.

### **To whom did God reveal the Vedas?**

God revealed the *Vedas* to four great sages: He revealed the *Rig-Veda* to *Agni*, the *-Veda* to *Vayu*, the *Sama-Veda* to *Aditya*, and the *Atharva-Veda* to *Angira*.

How did he reveal? He is formless, he has no body, no mouth and tongue. Then how could he speak to them?

God is omnipresent. He is in the soul of human beings too. He speaks into the soul from within, through intuition. He does not burst forth through thunder and lightning and '*Akash-vani*'. The pure and pious soul of the sages was the medium of His voice. This is a scientific explanation of the way revelation is made. But why to these four only? Because they were the purest and the most pious souls, therefore they were the fittest media of the voice of God. From these four, another great sage received the *Vedas*, that was *Brahma*. And so the knowledge passed on and on.

### **Why were the Vedas revealed in Sanskrit?**

Because *Sanskrit* is the original and universal language of mankind. It was not a local language spoken by a particular community. If revelation were made in a local language, then God would be partial to one community. But God is the God of all mankind. Therefore the revelation too was in the language of mankind. It was one humanity, one language, and that language was *Sanskrit*. Hence the Revelation was in *Sanskrit*.

*How can you say that Vedas are divine knowledge?* Well, Divine Knowledge by virtue of its divinity has to be true without exception. There should be no confusion, doubt or ambiguity about it. The knowledge, in the *Vedas*, of anything that there is in the world is just as the thing is. God is pure, immaculate, omniscient, just, merciful, etc. The *Vedas* describe Him as such. The knowledge about the soul and nature is exactly as confirmed by direct scientific and logical proof. The knowledge that is authentic, universal and unquestionable is divine. Such are the *Vedas*.

***Why need divine knowledge?***

Humanity evolved and slowly rose to a level of intelligence and wisdom and created great works such as the *Vedas*. Why need God to reveal the *Vedas*?

No, that's not possible. If you keep a human child among beasts in the forest away from human society, the child will grow up only as a wild beast. Many communities in the world remained in a primitive state until they came in contact with civilized people. Knowledge is the effect of a cause since there is nothing in the world without a cause. God is the original cause of the world, and so of knowledge too. When the whole universe and the souls lie asleep in the state of *Pralaya* (annihilation), human knowledge too lies asleep. But God never sleeps. He lets the universe awake and He reveals the knowledge and the original language of knowledge too. And He reveals the meanings too which are the relations between the words and the things. Later, as people studied and meditated, other sages realized the truth and meaning of the *Vedas*. These sages were called *Rishis*. The name of the Rishi who saw the meaning of a hymn was associated with that hymn. These *Rishis* are sometimes called the authors of those hymns. But this is a wrong view, they were only the seers of the meaning, not the authors of the hymns. Still later as more scholars studied the *Vedas* and the interpretations of the hymns by earlier sages, they wrote detailed commentaries on the *Vedas*. These works are written in a symbolic style and, besides the explanations of the hymns, they contain the history of *Vaidic* scholarship. These works are the *Brahmanas*.

***Are the Brahmana works Vedas?***

No, *Swamiji* says. Only the original *sanhitas*, *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*, are *Vedas*. The *Brahmanas* are commentaries. In the *Vedas*, there is no history. The *Vedas* were revealed at the dawn of creation. History, properly speaking, had not even begun. Then how could history be there in the *Vedas*? Secondly, the knowledge revealed in the *Vedas* is the eternal knowledge of the universe as it had been in the earlier creations and as it shall be in future creations. Historical knowledge is knowledge about some place and time. Its facts and language are conditioned by time and slowly they grow out of date. But the knowledge of the *Veda* is pure and eternal, and expressed in the language which too is eternal, not historical. The technique of description also is scientific. Just as there is no history in scientific formulae and mathematical equations, similarly there is no history in the *Vaidic mantras*. But in the *Brahmanas*, besides explanations and expositions written in the language of the time, there is a lot of history of *Vaidic* commentaries and the commentators. Therefore, the *Brahmanas* are not *Veda*, they are expositions and commentaries.

Besides the *Brahmanas*, there are *Shakhas* (Branches?) of the *Vedas*. These too sometimes have been called branches or parts or schools of the *Veda*. *Swamiji* says that the *Shakhas* were the schools of interpretation and not branches or versions of the *Vaidic* texts. With these *Shakhas* too the names of their founding *Rishis* are associated. But in no case are the *Shakhas* to be regarded as versions or alternative texts.

*Swami Dayananda* was the most formidable scholar who redeemed the essential nature of *Vaidic* knowledge as eternal light. He also challenged the historical-comparative method of interpretation advanced by the western scholars. The western scholars were conditioned by the Biblical view of the age of the world which is 4000 years. So they wanted to fit the *Vedas* too into those 4000 years. And just as the Jewish-Christian religion had evolved from Moses to Christ, so they read in the *Vedas* too a primitive form of growing natural religion. Of course, we do appreciate the work done by the westerners on the *Vedas*, still their attack on the divinity of the *Vedas* and the style and technique of their interpretation was met only by *Swami Dayananda*. If we wish to know about *Swamiji*'s contribution, we should read his commentary on the *Vedas* and the introduction to it.

# CHAPTER 8

## Creation of the World

What is the cause of this world? Did it come into being by accident? Has it always existed as it is? Or has it been created by an intelligent being?

### **The causes of the world:**

The *Rig-Veda* says: Before this world came into being, it lay as if covered in darkness, unknown, unknowable. The Lord God, with his infinite power, brought it into being (*RigVeda*, 10, 129, 3). The *Vedanta* also says that *Brahma*/God is the cause of the creation, sustenance and annihilation of the world. *Brahma* is the cause of the world.

What kind of cause? *Swamiji* explains the various kinds of causes: first there is the efficient cause (*nimitta karana*), then there is the material cause (*upadana karana*), and the third is *sadharana karana* or general ancillary cause. The efficient cause, which itself is not the result of some other cause, is the maker. The material cause is the material from which things are made. The *sadharana* cause is the general or instrumental cause. For example, in the case of a pot, the potter is the efficient cause, the clay is the material cause, and the wheel is the instrumental cause. In the case of the world, God is the efficient cause, *Prakriti* or nature is the material cause, and *jiva* is the *sadharana* or general cause.

On our own we can regard *jiva* as the 'Final cause' in terms of Greek philosophy. The final cause answers the purpose, the question: why is something made or created or done? In chapter 7 and 8 *Swamiji* writes on why God creates the universe. "God creates the universe and all the wealth of the world for the *jivas* out of his immense love so that they may live and enjoy as they may." In chapter 8, he says: "God creates because it is His nature (*swabhava*) to create, and He creates for the *jivas*". In other words, God's purpose is to create so that you and I and all may live happily and may have full experience of living in a dharmic manner. The *jiva* too is an efficient cause in a secondary or limited sense: it takes the materials provided by nature and makes things for use in life. But God is the first universal efficient cause, the human being, the other. When a thing is made, then besides the maker and the material, you need knowledge, imagination, energy, hands, instruments, time, space, direction, light and so many other things. These are the instrumental or the general causes.

Greek philosophy believes in four causes: efficient cause, material cause, formal cause and final cause. *Swamiji* does not mention the formal and the final causes. But his term '*Prayojana*' means the same thing, i.e., the purpose for which the world is made. The Greeks believed in forms as eternal things existing somewhere in heaven. The eternal maker, i.e., God gives to these forms material existences.

How do we work out the formal cause in *Swamiji's* thought? *Swamiji* quotes in chapter 7 from *Chhandogyopanishad* (6, 3, 2):

*Anenatmana jivenanupravisya namarupe vyakarvani*

"Let me create with life (*jiva*) a variety of living beings of different *names and forms*." Thus *Swamiji*'s thinking of names and forms, as given here, takes care and works out the different causes of creation: efficient, material, instrumental /general, formal and final.

### **The Trinity: God, *Jiva* and *Prakriti*:**

*Swamiji* is a trinitarian: He says on the authority of the *Vedas* that there are three basic eternal: *Brahma* (*Ishwar*/God), *Jiva*, and *Prakriti*. Without these three the world cannot come into existence. The three are together: The soul is in the body, the material form, and God pervades the soul as well as the body. So the three are together, in a sense 'one'. But the three are different in their essential nature: nature or *Prakriti* is '*Jada*', that is, inanimate, and insentient, but it is existent, real (*sat*). *Jiva* is existent and intelligent (it is *sat and chit*); God is existent, intelligent, and blissful. The soul's intelligence is limited, God's is infinite. The soul's bliss too is limited and ranges from zero away from God to near infinity when it is close to God. God's bliss is infinite.

The *Neo-Vedantis* believe that there is only one reality, *Brahma*. There is nothing else, neither *jiva*, nor *Prakriti*, nor form. All forms are unreal, illusion, dream. *Brahma* alone is the real Real, the same one appears in many forms. When we see many forms, we too are in a state of illusion. We are victims of ignorance. Form is only a condition created by our own ignorance. Separateness or identity too is an illusion. When the ignorance is removed, the veil of darkness is lifted, and then the one reality shines: I am *Brahma*, you are *Brahma*, everything is *Brahma*, there is nothing else. In the state of knowledge, all forms and differences evaporate like a dream. Only the one remains.

*Swamiji* examines this *Neo-Vedanti* view: He quotes from *Vedanta Sutas* (1, 2) to state their view:

*Janmadyasya yatah.*

That is, "*Brahma*, from whom follows the creation, etc., of this universe." Creation, etc., means creation, sustenance and destruction/ withdrawal of the universe. The *Neo-Vedantis* say that *Brahma* is the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe. In support of their view, they quote *Mundakopinishad*, 1, 1, 7:

### **Yathornanabhiih srijate grihnate ca**

"Just as the spider weaves the web from out of itself and withdraws it into itself, so *Brahma* creates the world from out of Itself and withdraws it into Itself". The *Neo-Vedantis* further quote from the *Upanishad*:

*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma neha nanasti kinchana*

That is, "Surely all this is *Brahma*. Nothing here is anything else."

*Swamiji* takes up the *Vedanta sutra* which states that *Brahma* is the cause of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe. He says that according to this sutra *Brahma* is the efficient cause of the universe. To say that *Brahma* is the efficient cause and *also* the material cause is unwarranted. To stretch the meaning arbitrarily is not justified. Then he takes up the image of the spider. He accepts the image but the image does not help the *Neo-Vedantic* view: The spider is the efficient as well as the material cause of the web, true. The spider is a *jiva*, a soul with instinctive intelligence. It has a body which is material, made from *Prakriti* as any other body. The *jiva* with its instinctive intelligence is the efficient cause of the web, and it creates the web from its material body which is the material cause of the web.

To say that "All this is *Brahma*, nothing else is here," is not correct. It is a quotation from two sources:

(i) *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma tajJalaniti santa upasita.*  
(*Chhandogya*, 3, 14, 1) and

(ii) *Neha nanasti kinchana* (*Katha*, 2, 1, 11).

The meaning is; O *jiva*, worship *Brahma*. *Brahma* is the cause of the creation, sustenance and life of this world. The world is pervaded by *Brahma*. Do not worship any other. Worship Him alone. This supreme Intelligence, one, constant and eternal, is pure by Itself. Other things, however many there be, affect it not. All of them, each in its form and character, exist by Him and in Him, but affect Him not.

*Swamiji* maintains that *Brahma*, *Jiva*, and *Prakriti* exist together, each with its distinctive nature. They are eternal and uncreated. *Brahma* is the creator and pervader of the universe, but it is unaffected by it. *Jiva* is the darling of God's love, the world is created for it, but it gets involved with the beauty and variety of it and, as a result, enjoys pleasure and suffers pain. *Prakriti* is shaped into matter, energy, and mind and sense to serve the purpose of God and the soul.

*Swamiji* quotes from *RigVeda* (1, 164, 20):

*Dva suparna sayuja sakhaya samanam vriksham parishasavajate.*  
*Tayoranyah pippalam svadvattyanashnan-nanyo abhichAkashiti.*

"Two, *Brahma* and *Jiva*, similar by virtue of intelligence and love, together as pervader and pervaded, in tune and friendly, sit on the tree of existence. The *jiva* tastes the fruits of the tree and experiences the sweet as well the bitter. But the other, *Brahma*, neither eats nor tastes, it simply watches."

Thus the three are different, and yet one, integrated: *Brahma* pervades both *jiva* and *Prakriti*, *Jiva* is integrated as the life of material forms, and *Prakriti* is inspired with the creative energy of God.

*Swamiji* quotes from *Shvetashvataropanishad* (4, 5) to underscore the character and value of *Prakriti*:

*Ajam ekam lohita-shukla-krishnam bahvih prajah srijmanam sarupah*  
*Ajo hyeko jushamano' nushete jahatyenam bhukta-bhogam ajo' nyah.*

*Prakriti* (the material cause) is unborn (eternal). It is white (*sattva*/intellect), red (*rajas*/energy), and dark (*tamas*/matter). It causes many forms of creation to come into being. Another unborn, eternal (*jiva*) is involved with it and enjoys it. Yet another unborn and, eternal (*Brahma*/God) is unaffected by it.

*Prakriti*, *jiva* and God, all the three are unborn and eternal. These are the causes of the world, but theirs is no cause. The eternal *jiva* experiences the world of *Prakriti*, the other eternal (God) neither tastes nor suffers the third, *Prakriti*, is aja, unborn and eternal, it is moulded into forms by God and experienced by the *jiva*.

**God is omnipotent.** Why can't God create *jiva* and *Prakriti* also? Answer: Omnipotence doesn't mean that God can do everything even against His own nature and against His own laws of creation. Omnipotence means that, in order to create the universe, He does not need the assistance of any other agent. Another question is : If God is formless, how can He create all the forms of this great universe? The answer is: God is formless, finer and subtler than *jiva* and *Prakriti*. He is immanent in the *jiva* and *Prakriti*, and therefore His will and intelligence works in the *jiva* and *Prakriti* from within. *Prakriti* and *jiva* are integrated and moulded into form by this immanent will of God which is infinite in its potential. On the other hand, if God had a body-form, He would not be able to handle and manipulate the subtle formless state of *Prakriti* and manifest the forms potentially present in *Prakriti*. He would need hands and tools too big for imagination to work as a mechanic. God being the immanent cause, He impels the material things from within to come into existence, the living ones with an integration of *jiva* and *Prakriti*, and non-living with *Prakriti*.

**The causes are eternal:**

Because there is no cause of a cause. Nor is anything created out of nothing. The real is created only out of real by the real. The three causes, the efficient cause, God, the material cause, *Prakriti*, and the general cause, *Jiva*, are real. Therefore the world is real, it is not a dream, nor illusion.

There is also a view that the causes are not needed, because the world is in a steady state by its own nature (*svabhava*). But *Swamiji* says that if it be the nature of the world to be what it is, then nothing will ever go out of existence, and if it goes out of existence, it will never come into existence. And if it comes into existence, goes out of existence, and comes into existence again in a cycle, then that means that there is a law and there is an intelligence that controls the law and its operation, and that intelligence is God. And this cycle of creation and annihilation is eternal just like the cycle of day and night. It has been there since eternity and shall be there till eternity.

**The cycle of creation:**

In this cycle, every creation is similar: The sun and other stars, the earth and other planets are created in the same manner and form as before. First, there is a vibration of thought in the mind of the Lord of Eternity and then the emergence of existential Being and Becoming with the law of the universe. *Swamiji* describes this course of creation from the primordial state of *Prakriti* to various material and biological stages upto the creation of humanity. *Prakriti* is the original material reality of nature which is beyond our imagination. It is the mother of mind/thought, energy and matter lying in an intangible inert state. The *Sankhya* philosophy (1, 61) describes the evolutes of it : *Mahan* (thought), *ahankara* (individuality/form), five subtle elements and mind, five senses of perception, five senses of volition and action, and the five gross elements - *Akash* (space), *Vayu* (electric energy), *Agni* (heat and light), *Jala* (water), *prithivi* (earth). Then follows vegetation, food, vitality and the seed, and then the living beings.

**The creation of humanity:**

*Swamiji* makes one remarkable observation which science has yet to explain and confirm, surely sometime in the future after the successful cloning of a living form. The first generation of human beings came into existence directly from nature as described above. The later generations were born from the mating of the male and the female. The first generation could not be parents-born because the first generation, being the first, could not have parents. *Swamiji's* description of the *jivas* in the state of *Pralaya* (annihilation) and before creation shows that the *jivas* existed in a seed state (souls with subtle and causal bodies). And just as seeds sprout when they find the right environment, water and air, similarly the *jivas* developed directly in the great womb of nature. They rose in a large number in the stage of youth because, otherwise had they been born in the child or old stage, who

would nurse and look after them? This idea looks fantastic, but in this age of science we find that realities are stranger than fantasies.

**Swamiji had a unified vision** of the *Vedas*, specially of *Darshan* philosophy and the *Upanishads*. The order of perceptible creation is from *Akash* to *prithivi* and so on. But in *Chhandogya Upanishad*, creation is said to begin with *Agni*, and in *Aitareya*, with *Jala*. Elsewhere it is said to begin with *Purusha*, sometime with *Hiranyagarbha*, with *Karma* (volition) in *Mimansa*, time in *Vaisheshika*, smallest particles in *Nyaya*, *Purushartha* (will) in *Yoga*, *Prakriti* in *Sankhya*, and *Brahma* in *Vedanta*. Which view is correct? They are all so different.

*Swamiji* harmonizes all these views with his unified vision. He says that after annihilation, creation begins with God as the efficient cause and *Prakriti* as the material cause. But when annihilation is upto the *Agni* stage, *Akash* and *Vayu* remain and so creation starts with *Agni* but when *Agni* also remains, then creation begins with water. In short creation starts from the stage annihilation terminates. *Purusha* and *Hiranyagarbha* are different names of God. Similarly in the six *Darshanas* too there is no conflict. *Mimansa* says that for every action and operation, *Karma*, will and activity is indispensable. According to *Vaisheshika*, every operation takes place in time. *Nyaya* underlines the material cause; *Yoga* emphasizes knowledge, vision, and thought; *Sankhya* emphasizes the integration of materials; and *Vedanta* emphasizes the efficient cause, *Brahma*. The six *Darshans* thus do not conflict with one another but complement the causes of creation - - the efficient cause (God), the material cause (*Prakriti*), and the general cause (space, time, will, action, etc.). *Swamiji's* interpretation thus harmonizes the *Darshan* philosophy and counters the other view that it is conflictive.

### **Cosmological studies:**

*Swamiji* indicates the possibilities of cosmological studies. He says on the basis of *Vaidic* studies that there are many solar systems in the world, each with its planets and life on the planets. The earth moves round the sun (*YajurVeda* 3, 6), and the sun, too, blazing brilliant, light of the system, giver of life, energy and rain, moves on in its orbit with its family (*YajurVeda*, 33, 43), but it does not move round any planet such as the earth. The other solar systems too move in the same manner. The earth moves on its axis, and thereby are 'born' the days and nights with the shift of light and shade on the earth. When the sun 'rises' in India, it 'sets' in America, and when it rises in America, it sets in India. Nothing that has mass and gravity in the world is static, it moves. There is life on other planets in the other solar systems, more or less alike as on earth but, may be, with some difference of form. This idea *Swamiji* gets from the *Vaidic* word '*Vasu*', which means 'a place or abode for living beings'. In each cycle of creation, the cosmic system with its suns and planets comes into being. The sun is '*Bradhna*', mighty big, lakhs of times bigger than, and millions and millions miles far from, the earth. The *Vedas* too are revealed by the omniscient lord of eternity in the same form and style -- they are the articulation of eternal consciousness in meta-language which was the original language revealed in the soul of the four sages (*Agni, Vayu, Aditya and Angira*) at the dawn of creation.

### **Cosmic Gravitation:**

What is the power that holds the earth and the universe? The popular superstition is that the earth rests on the shoulders of an ox or on the hood of the Serpent *Shesha*. This superstition has arisen from a misunderstanding of the words *Uksha* and *Shesha*. *Uksha* means an 'ox' as well as 'the sun'. The earth is sustained by the sun and not by an ox. Similarly *shesha* means the 'serpent' as well as the lord of the universe who *remains* even after the world is annihilated. When the universe is reduced to its primordial state which is indescribable in language, then the lord remains: He holds

the universe in that state. And then He creates and sustains it while it is in operation. Hence the *YajurVeda* says (13, 4, 32, 6) that the lord holds the earth and heaven and all the middle regions.

### **The Age of the world:**

How old is creation, and what is its age? *Swamiji* discusses this question in detail in his Introduction to the Commentary on the *Vedas*. According to him, the age of the world with humanity and the *Vedas* is four arab and thirty-two crore (i.e., four billion and three hundred twenty million) years. Now this world is nearly two billion years old. For details reference may be made to *Swamiji's* Introduction to the Commentary on the *Vedas*, specially the chapter on the revelation of the *Vedas*. Because of this *Vaidic* vision of the world, Darwin's *Origin of the Species* did not cause that sort of disturbance in India as it did in the west in the nineteenth century.

**Where did the creation of humanity take place?** In 'Trivishtapa' which is modern Tibet. It was one race, one community, one family, except that the people did have differences of nature and character. There were two categories only: those who were positive, creative and helpful were called 'Aryas' which means good; and those who showed negative, destructive and selfish tendencies were called 'Dasyus' which means 'not good'. These words are descriptive of merit and not of colour or race. From Trivishtapa, the people migrated to India, Iran, China, Europe, etc. India from the spine of the Himalayas to Rameshwaram in the south, from Atak River in the west to the *Brahmaputra* in the east was called *Aryavartta*. The 'Aryas' were the original inhabitants of India. The stories of the conflicts and battles between the alien Aryans and the native Dravidas are distortions created by historians. All this part of history needs to be researched further.

### **The species and the question of justice:**

One question more: All the living beings of different species were created in the very beginning. Is it not unjust on the part of God to give lower and higher forms to *jivas* for no fault of theirs? No, says *Swamiji*. When the age of one world of created beings is over, *Pralaya* (Annihilation) takes place. All the *jivas* carry their *Karmas* with them in their subtle bodies and this, we might say, is their seed state. They lie dormant in that state during *Pralaya*, and when the time for the next creation is ripe they find their appropriate forms according to their previous *Karmas* direct from nature as has been described earlier. So when the *jivas* regain their living forms in different species, they do so according to their past *Karma* and God's justice.

*Swamiji's* background of thought is cosmic, his vision is *Vaidic*, and his view of the *Vedas* is that they are the universal scriptures of humanity recorded in metalanguage. Therefore his view of the universe, of one humanity, of law and justice, and of the *Vedas* calls for bold ways of research and study. Here is one suggestive example: The *Upanishad* describes *Brahma* as "greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest." It also describes It as "The centre of the cosmos." How could these words be understood?

### **The centre hold:**

The sun is the centre of the solar system. The planets such as the earth go round it as if in homage. According to the laws of gravitation, the sun holds the planet in orbit in relation to its mass and distance. In physical terms, the centre of a physical system must be greater than its members. Now, if the centre of the universe were material, then, in physical terms, how great would the centre and wielder of the cosmos be? Such physical possibility is unimaginable, impossible. Let us think of the centre of our galaxy. It could be only a tiny black-hole, womb of mind-boggling energy. And what could be the centre of all the galaxies? Probably a black hole smaller than a point, but the womb of infinite and interminable energy - imperceptible, unthinkable, and unimaginable: "There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, lightning reaches not there. How could this ordinary light?"

Words fall back, the mind fails. This is the centre, this is *Brahma*, less than a point, which explodes beyond an ever expanding circumference. Science could raise questions in the *Vaidic* direction and wait for the answer till.....who knows???

# CHAPTER 9

## Freedom and Bondage

Knowledge is freedom. And ignorance is bondage.

Existence is a play of life and death. For average people, life is joy and death is pain, the worst of all. How to conquer pain and death? The *YajurVeda* says:

*Vidyaam chaavidyam cha yas tad vedo'bhayam saha  
Avidyayaa mrityum tirtvaa vidyayaamritam-ashnute.*

One who knows *that* with both *Vidya* and *Avidya*, crosses death with *avidya* and attains immortality with *Vidya*.

It looks mysterious: the human being crosses death with *avidya*! Of course, the other part of the *mantra* is simple: You attain immortality with *Vidya*, *Vidya* being knowledge of reality as it is.

What is *avidya*? It is ignorance and even more: it is the perversity of knowledge. The *Yoga Darshan* (2, 5) describes *avidya*:

*Anitya-ashuchi-dukhhaanaatmasu nitya-shuchi-sukhaatma-khyaatir-avidyaa..*

"The belief that the temporary is permanent, the impure is pure, pain is pleasure, and the non-spirit is the spirit: This is *avidya*."

How can one cross the pain of death with this perversity of knowledge which is the height of ignorance?

In fact, *avidya* means not only ignorance (which is the negation of knowledge), it also means 'something *other* than knowledge', and that other thing (which is valuable in life) is *Karma* (action). For a successful living, you need knowledge as well as the application of knowledge in practice. This is okay. But *Swamiji* quotes the *Yoga* philosophy also for *avidya*, and there *avidya* means the reverse of knowledge. How does *avidya* help? In fact, *avidya* is the cause of bondage. Hence what the *mantra* quoted above means is this: *avidya* binds, but the *knowledge of avidya* saves from bondage and helps us to cross the pain of death, while *Vidya* leads to immortality, that is, to freedom from the cycle of birth and death. So real knowledge in the case of the successful man is twofold: Knowledge of things *as they are*, and knowledge of things *as they are not*. So the man of action will do things according to his right knowledge of things and avoid the actions which ignorant and perverse people do, because his knowledge of what is wrong tells him to avoid the evil. We should do the right and avoid being deceived by evil. To do good and avoid evil, that is right action. right knowledge, right action and right worship, that is the way to freedom from suffering and bondage. That freedom is *Moksha*. Wrong knowledge, wrong action and wrong worship, all follow from ignorance and lead to bondage.

We love life and fear death. We assert our existence, shout and fight for survival, this is human instinct. In the flux of existence and the onsets of the life around, we fall a prey to *avidya*: We cling to things which are temporary, forgetting that we are the soul and not the body. We feel we are the

body, the bank balance, the property, the family and all, and we act for these in any manner possible. These things are facts, but their value is not absolute. We should work for these but not at the cost of our soul. We should, but we don't, we fall a prey to *avidya* and identify the self with material things--the I becomes me and mine. That is *asmita*. Because of *asmita*, we fall a prey to *Raga*, attachment, and *Dvesha*, hate and violence. Ultimately we forget death and search for immortality in material things. We fail. This failure leads to frustration and further ambition, and that ambition becomes *Vasana* (desire) which is recorded in the unconscious mind. The *vasanas* lead us on and we are caught up in the whirlpool of further births and deaths. The *Jiva* should break through that bondage of limitations to freedom, that would be *Moksha*.

**There are some preliminary objections to this idea of Moksha:**

"*Jiva* is *Brahma*, it never suffers from ignorance or any other limitations. It never descends into any form, so it is neither born, nor dies, nor needs any *Moksha*. In fact what it feels as pleasure and pain are conditions of the mind, not the state of the soul. The soul is a reflection of *Brahma*, and when it is called man or woman in the human body, this name is only a fiction, an imposition by the self in a state of ignorance."

*Swamiji* rejects this view: He says that *Brahma* never suffers from ignorance, it is always perfect and omniscient. It is formless and omnipresent. It does not reflect, because there is no reflection of the formless. *Jiva* is a distinct reality. It is intelligent but in a limited sense. Therefore, in its search for living, it goes astray. And therefore it needs *Dharma* -- right knowledge, right action and right worship, *and* the grace of God to be free from all suffering.

In the state of *Moksha*, the soul is free of the gross body and all the desires. Therefore it is also free from all the limitations of the body and the world. But it retains the subtle body (*Sukshma sharir*) and all its potentials: It retains its faculties, the five senses of perception, five senses of action, five pranic energies, the mind, the intellect and its sense of identity. It carries no negativities, no desires, no evil. Its potentialities are essential, not material, qualities and not instruments. Its intelligence and will are essential and seek no material fulfilment. It exists in the direct presence of *Brahma* and shares the infinite bliss and awareness of the Divine. Sharing the divine infiniscience, it can experience anything from its omniscience.

The essential faculties which the *jiva* retains in *Moksha* are variations of its essential faculty as *jiva*: Strength, courage, attraction, inspiration, motion, fear, analysis, action, memory, enthusiasm, decision, will, love, hate, integration, division, organizing, differentiation, hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell and knowing. Elsewhere as in *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshika* philosophy, the same potentials are described: love and hate, joy and sorrow, action and discrimination. In short, these are will and action; knowledge, understanding and discrimination; and feeling, emotion and passion. The *jiva* remains with all these essential faculties in the state of *Moksha*.

However, the *jiva* does not merge with God, it retains its identity, nature and character as *jiva*. At the same time it is distinct from its faculties although it retains them all. It is distinct and separate from its faculties because they do not in this state affect it as they do during its existence in an earthly form. The real thing in *Moksha* is the *jiva's* experience of divine happiness which is *svarga*. But this state of *Moksha* is not everlasting. The *jiva* returns to the earthly state after the age of *Moksha* is over. And that age is not short. At is 36000 '*ahorstras*' which means that it is 36000x2x4320000000 years, a mind - boggling age indeed. Four billion and three hundred twenty million years is the age of the world which is the day. The same age is the age of *Pralaya* which is the night. The Day and Night make up one *Ahoratra*. The age of *Moksha* is 36000 *ahorstras*. The

reason why the *jiva* returns to the earth is that everything that has a beginning must have an end. And since it is attained with one's own action, the fruit of the action will have an end. Hence the grand return like the grand exit.

This view of *Moksha* is different from the view of it in other beliefs. It is not a state of Paradise where pleasures of the world abound in particular regions of the world like the sky or Goloka or Baikuntha, etc. The state of *Moksha* is universal in the presence of God and God is omnipresent. Nor is it like the state described in the *Puranas*: *Salokya* (living in the particular region of God), *Sanujya* (living like God's younger brother), *Sarupya* (being of the same form as God), *Samipyra* (being close to God), and *Sayujya* (joining God in closeness). We already enjoy these kinds of *Moksha* as thus described: God is omnipresent, so we are in the region of God all the time in the state of *Salokya*. We are close to Him in his presence (*Samipyra*), we are all too small but we are dear to him (*Sanujya*), and we are always in His presence (*Sayujya*). *Moksha* really means divine happiness in His universal presence and sharing in the Divine consciousness. Until then the *Jiva* continues in the journey of existence.

During the state of existence one has to move from one *yoni* (form) to another, ranging from the luckiest human being to the worst of beasts, birds and even trees, and each new birth is the result of the earlier performance in *Karma*. Broadly speaking, a *jiva* transmigrates to another form, depending on the dominance of a ruling quality of character-*Satva* (purity and lightness), *Rajas* (passion and energy), and *Tamas* (inertia and viciousness). When a *jiva* has more virtue than vice, it is reborn as a noble person. When it has more vice than virtue it is reborn as an animal. And when it has an equal balance of virtue and vice, it is reborn as an ordinary human being. Even among human beings, there are different orders of happiness and nobility.

When a *jiva* leaves its body on death, it goes to the '*House of Yama*'. *Yama* is generally believed to be the God of death. But the '*House of Yama*' means the 'air in space' in the language of *Veda*. God is *Dharma Raj*, the universal Judge, who sits in judgement in the very heart of the *jiva*. From the air, the *jiva* is made to travel to herbs and food and water, and through food and water it enters the body of the parent-to-be. From the parent's body through its vitality it enters the mother's body and is born in the next *yoni*. The *jiva* enters a male or female body according to the dominance of male or female qualities in its psyche. It may take any number of life times for the *jiva* before it reaches the destination, *Moksha*.

*Moksha* is attained by persistent effort and trial, it is not attained in the ordinary course of nature. The cause of *Moksha* is the pursuit of *Dharma*, i.e., right knowledge, right action and right worship. *Adharma*, i.e., wrong knowledge, wrong action and wrong worship, is the cause of bondage. With *Dharmic* consciousness, a person should live through life with an attitude of detachment. One should enjoy what life has to offer as a gift of God, and never forget the goal of life, *Bhoga* and *Apavarga*, i.e., the experience of life *and* retiring from life with thanks to the Lord.

*Swamiji* gives in detail an explanation of Dharmic action from *Darshan* philosophy.

There are four parts of this programme:

- I. *Sadhana* - *Chatushstaya* (four means),
- II. *Anubandha* - *Chatushstaya* (four applications),
- III. *Shravana* - *Chatushstaya* (four orders of study),
- IV. Meditation

The four - fold programme is the following:

I. *Sadhana Chatushtaya* (the four means)

A. *Viveka* (discriminative knowledge):

- i. *Knowledge of truth*: First a person should have knowledge of things as they are as well as knowledge of what things are not. One should know *dharma* and *adharma*, duty and non-duty and the distinction between virtue and vice. This knowledge enlightens a person as guide on the path of practice.
- ii. *Knowledge of the five-fold sheath (cover) of the soul*:
  - (a) First, the gross body which is the *Annamaya kosha* which consists of the earthy mass from the skin to the bones.
  - (b) Then there is the *Pranamaya kosha*, the energy system which comprises *Prana* (breath), *Apana*, the air which goes down and out, *Samana*, which centres at the navel and distributes the energy through the body, *Udana* centred in the throat which controls the intake of food and water, and *Vyana* which is the vehicle of nervous communication through the body.
  - (c) Then there is the *Manomaya kosha* which consists of five *karmendriyas* or organs of volition (tongue, feet, hands, two organs of excretion), mind and the sense of identity "I am".
  - (d) Then the *Vijnanamaya kosha* which consists of the understanding (*buddhi*), memory (*chitta*) and the five senses of perception, (hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell.)
  - (e) The fifth is *Anandamaya kosha* which makes us feel love, pleasure, happiness and well-being and is based on the original *Prakriti*.
- iii. *Knowledge of three states of personality*:
  - (a) First there is *Jagrita*, the waking state in which the conscious mind is at work;
  - (b) Then the *Swapna*, the dream state in which the sub-conscious mind is at work;
  - (c) and third is *Sushupti*, the sleep state in which personality and mind retire into the unconscious mind.
- iv. *Knowledge of the bodies*:
  - (a) First there is the *Sthula Sharira*, the gross body which is made of the five gross elements, earth, water, air, heat and ether.
  - (b) Next is the *Sukshma Sharira*, the subtle body which consists of the five subtle elements and the essential powers and qualities earlier mentioned. The subtle body and the essential potentialities of the soul remain with it even in the state of *Moksha*.
  - (c) The third is *Karana Sharira*, the causal body which is pure in nature and character common to all *jivas* in all states of existence.

(d) The fourth is *Turiya Sharira*, the transcendental body consisting of original *Prakriti* into which the soul retires in *samadhi* and experiences the universal divine happiness.

Human life is mysterious. *Jiva* cannot be without these sheaths, bodies and states of mind, and yet it is not these, it is separate and distinct in nature and essence from all these because the *jiva* is spirit, not *Prakriti*. When the *jiva* identifies with *Prakriti*, it gets involved and it becomes extrovert. But when it looks within it becomes introvert and watches the whole drama of its existence of which it is the hero as well as the spectator if it chooses to watch.

B. *The second means, next to Viveka is Vairagya*, the attitude of renunciation. Whatever the *Jiva* knows with *Viveka*, it must observe in practice. It should follow the true and the good, and give up what is evil. Even with the good and the true, except for God, one must not feel involved. Whatever is good in life is a gift of God, one should use it in a spirit of renunciation in order to do one's duty in a life of *dharma*.

C. *The third means is the six fold virtue*, the following ways of living:

i. *Shama*, peace of mind, the attitude of contentment with which one should do good acts and avoid evil. Be undisturbed in every state, success or failure, gain or loss.

ii. *Dama*, control over one's mind and senses so that one is saved from indulging in evil.

iii. *Uparati*, rejection of pleasure as a value in itself. If one is indifferent to pleasures of the sense, one remains self-possessed, master of his ways of living, dedicated to virtue.

iv. *Titiksha*, dedication to *Moksha* in spite of praise or condemnation, loss or gain. Never falter from the path of *Moksha*.

v. *Shraddha*, inviolable faith in sacred literature, words of the saints and sages and the pious ways of life.

vi. *Samadhana*, surrender to God and concentration of mind on the presence of God.

D. *Mumukshutva*, the sole value of *Moksha* in life. Just as the man dying of hunger has no interest in anything except food, *Mumukshutva* means: Nothing for me except *Moksha*.

These are the four great means of *Moksha*.

II. Next, the four great applications, the *Anubandhas*:

A. One is *adhikar*, which means that one who knows the means of *Moksha* and lives in a state of *Viveka* (discrimination) deserves *Moksha*. So one must remain dedicated to *Moksha* and the means of it and continue to deserve the freedom.

B. *Sambandha*, no other relation than total involvement with God, *Moksha* and sacred literature.

C. *Vishaya*, the sole interest in *Brahma* and *Moksha*, so deep that the person is consumed in the love of the divine.

D. *Prayojana*, the sole aim and object of the pious person is God and *Moksha*.

These are the four *Anubandhas*, practical implications and applications of the great means of *Moksha*.

III. Next comes *Shravana chatushtaya*, the four stages of study by reading and listening:

A. *Shravana*, listening to the person who speaks on the nature of *Brahma* with utmost attention because the knowledge about *Brahma* is the most subtle.

B. *Manana*, thinking and reflecting on what you have heard in order to internalize the thoughts and ideas.

C. *Nididhyasana*, meditation on the meaning of what you have heard in order to realize the truth behind the words.

D. *Sakshatkara*, direct realization of the thing in terms of its reality in life, say the reality of God as a presence, or the direct experience of the truth and power of an idea.

#### **IV. Finally, Meditation.**

If you wish to live happy, don't try to possess the whole world. Know your limitations as well as your powers and work your best with those powers within your limitations with perfect faith in God and surrender to Him. Live and also watch yourself in performance as your own observer so that you get your own feedback on your life. Guard yourself against *Tamoguna*, i.e., anger, impurity, laziness, casualness, etc., against *Rajoguna*, i.e., envy, jealousy, sexuality, pride, fitfulness of mind, etc., and cultivate habits and ways of truth, peace, naturalness, purity, knowledge and good thoughts. Be friendly with the good, sympathetic to the poor, happy with the pious and care not for the wicked. Meditate at least for two hours a day and keep a watch on your body, mind and senses so that they don't lead you astray. Above all, keep your eyes fixed on the one goal across the vast play of existence--walking through to the end of it to complete freedom in the presence of the Divine, direct, immediate and intimate. Meditation!

# CHAPTER 10

## Good Conduct

Can you think of a person without will and desire? Not easily. You desire so many things because you need them to make life possible, and comfortable. On the other hand, you can't imagine an intelligent person who lives only for desire. So Manu says that mere desire is as undesirable as total desirelessness. The things you will and desire, intend and execute in action must have value, and that value must be dharmic.

What is the difference between an uneducated, illiterate and stupid person, on the one hand, and an intelligent, educated and wise person, on the other? The difference is this: Life for the former is behaviour -- the person *doesn't know* why he is doing what he is doing; for the latter, life is discipline, *sadhana, dharma* -- the person *knows* the reason and value of his action as part of his *dharma*. Therefore, good conduct is *dharma*, and *dharma* is meaningful when it is lived in life through good conduct in full awareness.

### **Acharah Paramo Dharmah:**

The supreme value of *dharma* is realized in practical living, or, good conduct is living *dharma*.

*What are the pillars of Dharma* on which the life of a good person and the structure and working of a good society rest? These are: *Vedas (Shruti)*, sacred works of the sages (*Smritis*), good conduct, and the voice of conscience both individual and collective. These are the foundations of *dharma* and the good life:

*Vedah smritih sadacharah svasya cha priyamatmanah  
Etac-chaturvidham prahuh sakshad dharmasya lakshanam.*

*Veda* is the supreme authority on *Dharma*. The *Smritis* such as *ManuSmriti* are *Dharma-Shastras*. They lay down the rules of *dharma*, but they are not supreme authorities or primary authorities on their own. They are authorities as much as they are in agreement with the *Vedas*. There is no history in the *Vedas*, the *Vedas* are wholly scientific and universal knowledge. But the *Smritis* are written at certain times in certain circumstances. Therefore they *can* contain certain historical values. Hence, before accepting them we should refer back to the *Vedas* whenever we feel we are in doubt about their relevance. *Sadachara* means principles of good and pious living. *Vedas* are the basis of these. In addition we have the words and examples of noble saints and sages. But the most important in today's circumstances of freedom and human rights is the voice of conscience. *Swamiji* is all for freedom of conscience provided the man of conscience cares for moral, social and national good in a broad framework of dharmic values, i.e., values of universal significance.

No code of *dharmic*, social, moral or national values can be successful unless the human being is sincere to himself or herself and observes clean personal values. After all, an individual is a part of society as a cell is part of the body. So unless the cell is healthy his/her body system cannot remain healthy and strong. A person must control the senses and mind. Without self-control, a person cannot be moral and virtuous. Some advocates of nature plead for the *Satisfaction* of the senses and mind because, they say, our desire and hunger should be exhausted if we want to be at peace. No, says *Swamiji*, it is wrong. Feed the fire with oil and it blazes all the more. So the mind must control

the senses, our reason should control the mind, and our soul should control our reason. The soul is the master, reason is the driver, the mind is the reins and the senses are the horses of the chariot of our life. Without self-control, a person cannot even understand *dharma* and good conduct. Control your food habits, control your emotions, control your love of praise and flattery and increase your intrinsic worth of character. Then you will appreciate and pursue the values of your community, nation and humanity.

*There are values universally recognized:* material wealth, your family and relatives, social status and position, your performance and achievement and your knowledge and education. Each one of these is more important than the previous one. So knowledge and education is really of the highest value and money is at the lowest position. Age is no factor in matters of knowledge. The person with knowledge should be respected even though he/she is younger than a grey head. Reverse the order and perversion follows.

The good man ought to be a man of reverence, love, compassion and hospitality. In fact, compassion, love, and reverence are various shades of generosity, magnanimity and piety. These values begin at home and extend to the society at large. The *Upanishad* says that the mother, the father and the teacher are worthy of love and reverence. The guest, a retired person, a senior, or even a chance visitor is worthy of respect and hospitality. A man of generosity and hospitality, respect and reverence is a man of natural piety. His dedication to family values maintains the continuity of the family as a sub-systemic institution of the nation and a seat for the growth of culture and national health. Otherwise the nuclear family breaks up into individuals. We end up with neglected children and a fragmented society.

Thus first a good and healthy individual, then a happy and harmonious family, and then a strong and prosperous nation.

*Swamiji* goes all out for a strong, free, happy, prosperous and rational nation. He feels sorry for a country such as India -- in fact he feels sorry for any country--where the native people toiled and suffered and the foreigners ruled. If there is conflict of interests between one country and another, then fighting for freedom and self-respect is every nation's right and duty. For any country in such a situation, victory and freedom is the good life and defeat and slavery is a sin. According to *Swamiji*, superstition was India's enemy no.1, because it led to irrationality, weakness of character, social division and disunity, and ultimately to slavery and poverty. *Swamiji* relates superstition to loss of free thinking, and the loss of free thinking to all round breakdown. He takes up the social and national weaknesses one by one.

*First, in matters of food.* Imagine a soldier on the battle field cooking his own food because food cooked by another was against his religion. The result? Defeat and a wasted country condemned to slavery. Many people would refuse to eat food cooked by a '*Shudra*' which means a servant. *Swamiji* says that men and women dedicated to knowledge (*Brahmans*), to defence (*Kshatriyas*), and production, distribution and management of the country's material resources and wealth (*Vaishyas*) are too busy to cook. So why not employ those who can do only manual labour as servants to cook and clean? It is a question of social economy as part of religion and ethics. Of course, the servants must be looked after and maintained well so that they live clean and happy.

### **Community Dining:**

Another question is whether one should dine with other communities or members of another faith. Why not, says *Swamiji*, but the one criterion of yes or no is whether the other community observes clean habits or not. For example, if a community is dominantly non-vegetarian while you are not,

then it is likely that the vegetarian's habits of clean vegetarianism are affected. The ethics and hygiene in matters of food being observed, you may eat anywhere with anybody and any community.

### **Good Food:**

*Swamiji's* criterion of good food is simple and ethical, morally very sound indeed: When food is obtained with violence (food such as meat and eggs), theft, deceit, breach of faith, it is bad, while food obtained with love and non-violence, honesty and hard work is good for body and mind. The food which is health giving, fights disease and gives strength, courage, health, longevity and intelligence is good. Milk, butter, fruits and vegetables, sweets, whole grains, prepared well and in the right combination, taken in the right quantity at the right and regular time is good. Of course, the good food should suit your nature and temperament. One must avoid meat and eggs, and all the drugs because meat and eggs are not human food, and drugs break down the digestive and the nervous system.

*Swamiji condemns untouchability* and insists on equality of human status and proper treatment, but he says that we must be clean in our habits: Keep your body and clothes clean, keep the home clean, specially the kitchen and the dining space. For this reason, he says that two people, even husband and wife, should not eat together. Never take food left by another person. Some simple people believe--and they have been led to believe by clever *gurus*--that the food left by the *guru* should be eaten as *Prasad*, as a blessing. This is nonsense. The right meaning of the words, wherever they are written, is that the disciple should eat after the *guru* has eaten. That is the correct way of doing homage to the *guru*, but eating what the *guru* has left is an unclean habit and superstition. Food taken by anybody affects the blood, the body system and the mind and character of a person. Therefore two persons eating the same food together run a physical as well as a psychological risk. The habit is a health hazard, and whether you regard it as a mark of love or piety, it must be given up.

Another superstition which still exists is that food boiled or baked by a non-*Brahman* is impure while the food fried by the same person is pure. This is just a way of exploiting simple people and eating rich food at other's cost.

*Foreign Travel:* Earlier there was a superstition that one must not cross the sea. So it was not possible to travel to foreign countries. *Swamiji* counters this superstition. He says on the authority of ancient literature that *Shukracharya*, son of *Vyasa*, travelled to China, Europe and the Middle East. Krishna and Arjun travelled by powered boat to America to invite Rishi Uddalaka to the *Yajna* of Yudhishtira. There were marriage relations too: Gandhari was from Gandhar, Madri from Iran, Ulupi was from America. *Manusmriti* mentions tax on boats and ships which shows that the Indians travelled to foreign countries. *Swamiji* says that a free and progressive country should have good relations with foreign countries for trade, economic and political cooperation, and cultural exchange and tourism.

*The Foreign Influence:* The superstition against foreign travel has disappeared, but a stronger superstition has followed. The western countries are far advanced in economy, science and technology. People from developing countries are so keen to migrate that they fall a prey to western diseases of advancement: eating meat, drinking alcohol, smoking, drugs, permissive sex, broken marriages, neglected children, discarded seniors, etc., all because of too much individual freedom and loose social ties. India suffers from many of these weaknesses because of wrong notions of modernization: it is said and believed that modernity means the western way of living, thinking, and speaking. It is said that one who does not take meat or drink suffers from inhibitions. Actually, modernity does not lie in westernization. Modernity lies in thinking freely and positively. Because

of the impact of the western ways of thinking and the surrender of the Indian ways of thinking as a healthy nation, Indians stand divided on the basis of caste, community, language and sectarian interests. *Swamiji* says:

"Unless the people stand united with common values, common opinions, common interests of mutual happiness, and unless they stand together as one family in hours of crisis, progress is impossible. Just eating together is not enough. Unless they give up bad habits and adopt good ones, they will not progress. They will, instead, go down. Under foreign rule, national ethics, national habits and national unity have all suffered. Disunity, divided opinion, sexual laxity, indulgence and incontinence, lying, misbehaving, illiteracy and neglect of the *Vaidic* way of living have followed. The Kauravas and the Yadavas destroyed themselves because of disunity and selfishness. Disunity infact is a national disease. May God inspire us with intelligence and will to fight out this demon."

The idea is that we should think freely as a united nation, learn good things from foreigners, adopt their good habits and discipline, develop self- confidence, work hard and march ahead as a free nation. Every nation should do that. Ultimately, as *Swamiji* says in the earlier chapters, we should be one world, one humanity, one government, one universal law, common interests, common values, common universal happiness.

In matters of food, on the whole there are two important considerations:

1. Ethical considerations as given in the *Dharma-Shastras*,
2. Medical, that is, health considerations.

The *Dharma-Shastras* say that all the classes of people should eat clean food, uncontaminated by dirty water, dirty air and dirty manure. This is important these days specially because around the cities untreated sewer water and un-degraded garbage is used as manure for growing vegetables and fast crops. Secondly, we must protect, in stead of destroying, animal life--cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, sheep, horses, asses, etc. We must preserve wild life also. If we kill these animals, we destroy the balance of nature and work against the interests of good health. In the west itself opinion is growing that pure vegetarian food is far better and desirable than animal food.

Finally in matters of good conduct and good food, the four criteria should be kept in mind:

*Veda* (i.e., Universal knowledge of the truth of existence and the law of nature), *Smriti* (i.e., *Dharma Shastras* written by sages for application of ideas of truth and goodness to life in actual situations), *Sadachara* (i.e., principles of good conduct according to reason and examples of the learned and wise sages), and the voice of good conscience. In situations of conflict, a person should do self-examination in the light of *Sadachara*, *Smriti* and the *Vedas*. The importance of the four is in an ascending order because the personal may not be traditional and the traditional may not after all be universal. The universal prevails over the traditional and the personal.

Does good conduct consist in particular forms and customs of a religion? For example, observing purdah, keeping a 'choti' or beard, a particular style of shaving, are these essential forms of good conduct? According to *Swamiji* all these are externals. Good conduct, good behaviour, all the externals, are reflections of the life within. And unless the life within is good, the externals are not reflections of good mind, they are a cover to hide the inner want. Quite often, the externals are

conditioned by the climatic and social conditions prevailing around. They can also be survivals of fashions prevailing till the end of a tradition. They also can be local customs and manners sanctified over time. *Swamiji* insists on the essentials within as of primary value, and regards the externals as of secondary importance. For example, he says that in cold climate a person may keep long hair, mustachios and all, but in hot climate one may shave off all including the 'choti'. Externals are externals justified and observed, or rejected for external reasons. But the essentials of good conduct are within. In matters of good conduct and *dharma* sincerity is the value, not hypocrisy.

## PART II

### INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

#### CHAPTER 11

##### Orthodox *Hinduism*

A nation on top of the world can stay in position only through unity, loyalty, hard work, self-discipline, service, justice, spirituality, universal enlightenment and education of the people. If it faults on these, it falls -- fractured, broken, battered -- to darkness, ignorance, poverty and slavery.

This is what happened to India as a nation around and after the war of *Mahabharata*. It must recover if it wants to live a life of self-respect in the world community.

This was *Swami Dayananda's* diagnosis of the Indian national scene. The remedy lies within -- the reshaping of human relationship with the self, the nation, the environment and the universal God. And this cannot be done without the building of individual and national character. The foundation of character is knowledge and the practice of truth and *dharma*. Hence *Swamiji* studies and analyses the Indian's knowledge and practice of *dharma* in order to distinguish truth and *dharma* from error and superstition.

When India followed the *Vedas* and the *Vaidic* way of life it was the leader of the world. It remained the leader from the earliest time of history upto the time around *Mahabharata*. The *Manusmriti*, *Maitryopanishad* and the *Mahabharata* mention the names of the rulers of India and leaders of the world then. The rulers of the world joined the *Mahabharata* war from China, Iran, Europe and America. Earlier, the world rulers of all these regions had joined Yudhishtira's coronation and accepted his leadership.

During that long period, India was the world teacher as well. Students from all over the world came to study the subjects of their choice in the fields of arts, sciences and state-craft. The *Manusmriti* says:

Let all the people of the world learn arts and sciences suitable to them from the seers and scholars born of in this land (2.20).

The knowledge of arts and sciences spread across the world from India via Egypt, Greece and Rome to Europe and America. This fact was acknowledged by a French scholar Jacolliot in his book *Bible in India*. Prince Dara Shikoh, son of the Mogul emperor Shah Jahan, acknowledged that he had found peace and enlightenment only from sacred *Sanskrit* literature. The custodians of this great knowledge were the saints and sages, the *Rishis* and the dedicated *Brahmans*. They preserved, propagated and extended the knowledge which was treasured in the *Vedas* and other literature.

In the field of science and technology too India was on top. It was the master of *mantra*. *Mantra*, according to *Swamiji*, does not mean a magic formula, it means vision, intuition, thought, idea, research and the whole process of scientific and technological method. The Indians saw things with their inner vision and worked out the ideas in practice with science and technology, building thereby their system of defence and warfare. They built weapons of war such as *Agneya-astra* (fire bomb), *Varuna-astra* (water/vapour bomb), *Nag-pash* (paralyser), *Mohana-astra* (hypnotiser) and

*Pashupata-astra*, a stronger version of *Agneya-astra*. They had the rifle and the artillery guns of high calibre as well.

Economically, India was the richest country of the world. It attracted the most adventurous traders of the world. It was known as the wonder land of gold and jewel. It was called the '*paras mani*', the philosopher's stone which converted the basest metals into gold. The leaders in knowledge, power and prosperity were the *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas* and the *Vaishyas* rich in *Vaidic* knowledge, science and culture.

Then came the disaster, the *Mahabharata*, first known world war of history, the dynastic war of brothers: brother fought and killed brother, friend fought and killed friend. The best of *Brahmans*, warriors and workers were eliminated. Darkness, ignorance, injustice and poverty followed. The post-*Mahabharata* period of history is known as the Dark Age of India. It is also described as 'Darkness at Noon' -- *Kaliyug*.

The *Brahmans* are the vision and voice of a nation, they are the mind and brain. In an age of darkness, the mind is boggled first. It loses the sense of right and wrong in the struggle for survival. So the *Brahmans* fell as the first casualty. Earlier, the *Brahmans* were a *Varna*, a merit-based selected class of people distinguished for their knowledge and dedication to the profession of research and teaching. Now they became a caste based on birth with or without merit. Those who had some merit -- thank God -- learnt the *Vedas* by rote and preserved this treasure of world knowledge for us. Theirs was a feat of memory, and *Swamiji* acknowledges the good they have done to mankind. But most of the *Brahmans* as a caste ended up as priests who lost the spirit of knowledge and sanctity of ritual. *Dharma* was reduced to superstition and ritual to priest-craft.

As knowledge and education went down further, the caste-based *Brahman* became more and more acceptable. Instead of being a leader and guide to intelligent people, he became an authority over ignorant and even helpless people. His only means of subsistence was the gifts in cash or kind received from his clients. So to ensure his income he clamped the authority still more. He pronounced the law of the priest: *Brahma-vakyam janardanam* (The word of the *Brahman* is the word of God). His word became law, infallible and inviolable. The caste became a rigid social fact. The priest even terrorized: "My word is irrevocable, I can curse you if you don't do as I ordain". Gone was merit. Gone was reason and truth. The best of the world was supposed to be for the *Brahmans*. The *Brahman* must not be punished. He is above the law.

Here we must be clear about *Swamiji*'s position, otherwise he can be misunderstood. He says that a *Brahman* is a *Brahman* by virtue of his/her merit and character. If a person has knowledge, wisdom, scholarship, having passed through a strong discipline of education and training and, by aptitude and disposition, is dedicated to the service and guidance of society as a matter of duty, he/she is a *Brahman* and venerable, no matter whatever the family of his/her birth. But if the person, even though born of *Brahman* parents, does not have this merit, virtue and disposition, he/she does not deserve to be called a *Brahman*. On the other hand, if a person is born in the family of a *Brahman* and also possesses the merits of a *Brahman*, he/she is definitely a *Brahman*. But, once again, this *Brahman*-parent family too should be *Brahman* by merit, character, habit and culture, and not *Brahman* only as a matter of caste. Such a *Brahman*-born child would inherit the *sansakars* of *Brahman* parents and that would be an advantage, but education, virtue of character and noble attitudes would still be indispensable qualifications. In short, education and merit (*guna*), noble actions (*Karma*), and noble nature (*svabhava*) are the essential and indispensable qualifications of a *Brahman*, birth alone is not. Birth is no substitute for merit. Thus *Swamiji* stood for real *Brahmans*,

not for the fakes. And if someone claims *Brahmanhood* by birth, merit is still an essential and indispensable qualification.

When the *Brahmans* lost on knowledge and education and took over the authority as priest, the evils of priest - craft followed. *Dharma* and truth were replaced by ritualism and superstition. Spurious texts were written, the *Vedas* were either forgotten or misinterpreted, and cruel and inhuman practices of violence in *Yajna* were given legitimacy and respectability. '*Ashwamedha*' became horse sacrifice, '*Gomedha*' became cow sacrifice, and '*Narmedha*' became human sacrifice. *Swamiji* challenged such violent interpretations of the texts. He asserted on the authority of *Shatapatha Brahmana* that '*ashwa*' means not 'horse' but the nation, 'go' means not 'cow' but food-grain, the sense organs, and earth, and '*nara*' means the dead human body. So *Ashwamedha* means ruling the country with justice, truth and compassion; keeping all foods, the sense organs, the sunlight and environment clean is *Gomedha*; and cremation of the dead body with proper fragrant materials and ghee is *Narmedha*. *Swamiji* says that *Yajna* is a cleansing holy act of piety and compassion, it can never be violent. Violence is perversion of *Dharma*.

*Vam-Marga* was a perversion of *Dharma* started by the priests. Their scriptures such as *Kali-tantra*, *Kularava-tantra*, *Mahanirmanana tantra* and *Jnanasankalani tantra* prescribe that liquor, meat, fish, tasty foods and free sex are the most pious acts of religion because they are the passports to salvation. The *Vam Margis* had their nightly orgies where men and women joined with free-for-all in drink and sex without distinction or discretion. Men were *Shivas* and women were *Parvatis*. They accepted no discipline, no rule of conduct, no law of ethics. They said that one bound by rules of conduct was an ordinary mortal but one who had crossed all bounds of law was Lord Shiva himself. *Swamiji* gives graphic details of their activities and practices which need not be described here. He shows to what extent perversion of truth and *Dharma* can go at the hands of exploiters. *Swamiji* challenged this perversion boldly and was never prepared for a compromise with untruth.

The *Vam Margis* tried to smuggle in their ideas into sacred literature with interpolations such as the following even in such institutional texts as the *Manusmriti*:

“There is no sin in eating meat, drinking liquor or adultery, because this is the natural behaviour of living beings. However, abstinence from these brings great reward to one who practises it” (Manu, 5, 56).

*Swamiji* challenged such interpolations too on the authority of the *Vedas* which have been preserved in their pure form.

As a reaction to the orgies and violence of *Vam Marga*, *Buddhism* and *Jainism* rose as a new force. They challenged the codes of violence and superstition with such questions:

“If the animal which is sacrificed in *Yajna* goes to heaven, why don't you kill your father as an offering in the *Yajna* and send him straight to Heaven? If the food and drink offered to the dead in *Shraddha* can reach them in the world, why can't food, drink and money be sent to a traveller to another place? Why should you carry heavy burdens from home when you travel?”

Such logic appealed, and people revolted against the violence and superstition in disgust. They followed the Jains and the *Buddhists*.

During this period of reaction and revolt, the *Vedas* were neglected and rejected. *Vaidic* practices and *sanskaras* such as the sacred thread (*yajno-pavita*) and *Brahmacharya* were rejected. As the

rebels grew in power and influence, they organized, structured, and established a new form of religion. They created a separate history and mythology of their creed, made idols of their prophets (*Tirthankaras*) and worshipped them as parallel gods, thus denying the one supreme God and rejecting the *Vaidic* tradition.

However, the *Jain* creed was not accepted in *Kashi*, *Kannauj*, the west and the south of the country. So after about three hundred years of *Jain* influence (say from 2500 to 2200 years ago), *Swami Shankaracharya* challenged the *Jains*, their philosophy and religion. He was a great scholar: He had studied the *Vedas* and also the *Jain* literature. He travelled all over the country from one corner to another challenging and debating with the *Jains*. The most important debate was held in the court of *Sudhanwa*, ruler of *Ujjain* on the condition that whosoever lost must accept the other's religion.

The *Jain* view was: There is no creator such as God, the world is eternal, the souls are eternal. Nothing is ever created, nothing ever is destroyed. Things are in a steady state.

*Shankaracharya's* view was: God (*Brahma*) is the Eternal reality and the sole creator of the world. The world and the souls are an illusion, not a reality. The world is *Maya*, the lord's play (*Lila*), a dream. The Lord alone is, nothing else really exists.

In short: The *Jain* view was that there is no God. The world and the *Jivas* are eternal. *Shankaracharya's* view was: The world and the *Jivas* are a dream. God alone is the eternal reality.

*Swami Shankaracharya* won the debate. Faith in God was re-established. But in this debate the world and the *Jivas* lost on reality. These were reduced to a dream, an illusion in the mind. The dream evaporates when the curtain of ignorance is lifted-- then the *Jiva* becomes *Brahma*. This was the new creed.

Here we should appreciate *Swami Dayananda's* deep insight into the nature and history of Indian philosophy. He appreciates *Swami Shankaracharya's* historical value: The *Swami's* motive and purpose was to defeat the atheism of the *Jains*. For this purpose, his stance that God alone is the Reality and nothing else is -- *Jiva* itself being, in reality, God-- this stance is appreciable. But, in absolute terms, his view that God and *jiva* are one and the same and the world is nothing but illusion, is not acceptable. *Swamiji* says that this was *Swami Shankaracharya's* own view. He says that this was not the view of *Vedanta*, it was *Shankaracharya's* own interpretation of *Vedanta*. Therefore *Swamiji* calls the followers of *Shankaracharya* 'Neo-Vedantis'. His own view is that God is the efficient cause of the universe, its material cause is *Prakriti*, the *jiva* and the world both are real as God is real. This is the *Vaidic* view as *Swamiji* asserts throughout *Satyarth Prakash*.

*Swamiji* takes up the *Neo-Vedanti* view for examination at length: The analysis and discussion is highly interesting. That is given here in summary form:

The *Neo-Vedanti* view is:-

1. The world is not real. It only appears as real. It is an illusion,
2. *Jiva* too is not a reality, it is *Brahma* in reality. *Jiva* is an identity which is self-imposed by *Brahma* on itself because of *Avidya* or *Maya* which is Ignorance. Under the influence of that Ignorance, it feels that it is a discrete reality as *Jiva*--doing, enjoying or suffering. When the imposition is gone with knowledge, it becomes *Brahma*.

3. *Brahma* alone is, nothing else is real and eternal.
4. *Maya* or *Avidya* is eternal.

*Swamiji's* examination of the view comes to the following conclusion, in brief:

1. Nothing can appear as something unless it exists. The experiencer cannot experience anything unless it is there in actuality, not even in a dream unless it is recorded in the mind from earlier experience. The world of our experience, therefore, is real.

2. *Jiva* is a reality. *Jiva* is not *Brahma* because, if it were *Brahma*, it must be above all ignorance and illusion since *Brahma* is omniscient. If it is said that *Jiva* is *Brahma*, but under the sufferance of Ignorance (*Avidya*) and Illusion (*Maya*) it regards itself as *Jiva*, the position is self-contradictory: Because it means that *Brahma* is omniscient as well as ignorant. And that it cannot be. The *Neo-Vedantis* do not make a distinction between *same* and *similar*. *Brahma* and *Jiva* are similar, but not the same. Let us work out the similarity:

- a) *Brahma* is *Sat* (existent), *Chit* (intelligent) and *Ananda* (blissful); It is Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent.
- b) *Jiva* is *Sat* and *Chit*, its knowledge and happiness is limited.
- c) *Prakriti* is *Sat*. It is neither *chit* nor *Ananda*.

*Brahma* and *Jiva* are similar in the sense that the qualities of *Sat* and *Chit* are common, but even there the *Sat* and *Chit* of *Jiva* are limited while in the case of *Brahma* they are not limited. *Jiva* can attain to full knowledge and *Ananda*, but even in that state it exists with and within *Brahma*. Thus both *Jiva* and *Brahma* are similar, and though both are together as pervader (*Vyapaka*, which is *Brahma*) and pervaded (*Vyapya*, which is *Jiva*), yet the two are not one and the same.

3. *Brahma* alone is ok because it is one without a second. But the *Neo-Vedantis* subject it to *Avidya* which too, they accept, is eternal. Thus there are at least two eternal, *Brahma* and *Avidya*. If the two are eternal, *Brahma* plus *Avidya* make up the world which too must be real because its constituents are real. Further, consciousness (*Chiti*) limited existentially by *Avidya* is a formal reality which is really the *Jivas* since *Brahma* cannot be limited.

Actually we should not translate *Avidya/Maya* as ignorance/illusion but as *Prakriti*, the material reality of which the world is made. The term *Avidya* occurs in *Ishopanishad* (*Yajur-Veda*, chapter 40), and the term *Maya/Avidya* occurs in *Shvetashvataropanishad* (4, 1, 4 and 10) where it means *Prakriti*, the material cause of the universe. *Swami Shankaracharya* himself writes in his commentary on *Shvetashvataropishad*, 1, 4 that *maya*, *Prakriti*, *shakti*, *avidya*, ignorance, etc., are synonyms of the material cause of the world. There is a basis for this suggestion: *Ishopanishad* is the foundation of *Vedanta Sutras*, and the *Vedanta Sutras* are a detailed study of the closing word of *Ishopanishad*. The *Upanishad* closes with

'*Om Kham Brahma*', and the *Vedanta Sutras* open with '*Athato Brahma Jijnasa*'.

It seems that *Swami Shankaracharya's* view of *Vedanta* was a historical reaction to the *Buddhist* and *Jain* view of a Godless world. If they said 'no God', the reply was 'nothing but God'. A great scholar

and debater as *Swami Shankaracharya* was, he carried the day for God but lost on the reality of the world of existence.

As *Swami Dayananda* has suggested, *Swami Shankaracharya's* reply to the *Jains* and *Buddhists* had historical relevance. But we should always remember that whatever the debate and whatever the provocation of the situation, we should not lose the balance and vision of the whole truth. *Swami Shankaracharya's* philosophy wanted the balance and integrative vision of *Dharma*, i.e., the value of action and worldly well-being along with the ultimate bliss of *Moksha*. And for want of this balance, the Indians fell a victim to inaction and indifference to life under the impact of *Neo-Vedantic* illusion. Later, the country had to pay dearly for this inaction. A corrective was provided by *Swami Vivekananda*.

The philosophy of *Shankaracharya* became a cult. Monasteries were established at Shringeri in the south, Bhugovardhan in the east, Joshi in the north and Sharda at Dwarka in the west. His disciples became high-priests, wielded great authority, gained power and wealth and lived in ease and luxury. Philosophy grew into an organization and institution. *Brahma*, actually the Lord of *Vidya* (*atman*) and *Avidya* (*Prakriti*) as in *Shvetashvataropanishad*, fell a victim to ignorance!

### **Sects and Cults:**

The Shaiva and Vam Margi cults were already there. They adopted *Shankaracharya* as the incarnation of Shiva. Together they worshipped the Linga and *Jaladhari*, the female organ of generation, thus combining the creative power of the God and the goddess. They adopted new marks of piety such as wearing of Rudraksh rosary and the application of ash on the body. Other cults were the cults of Vishnu and of Shakti professed by the Vaishnavaites and the Shaktas. Different ways of worship, different marks of piety, various forms and images of gods and goddesses were created and adopted for worship. *Dharma*, according to the *Vaidic* view, was a whole and comprehensive way of living, now it became religion, a cult, marked by external symbols of piety and rituals of worship. For example, the Chakrankitas are a sub-sect of the Vaishnavaites and they believe that branding the body with red hot iron and printing the mark of a conch shell, a wheel, a mace, and a lotus flower on the arm, making the mark of a trident on the fore-head, wearing a rosary, bearing a name ending in Das and receiving a sacred *mantra* - these are the road to God.

Thus arose many sects. They worship various gods -- Vishnu, Shiva, Rudra, Narayana, Ganapati, and many more, forgetting that these are names of the one and only God of infinite attributes. With each god of their choice and with different ways of worship, the people of our country got divided into many communities. There was further division of the people into different sects, each with different temples, different teachers and different priests. Each teacher and priest became a god in human form.

Not only this. Different scriptures were invented and written in the name of one or the other of the great sages of the past such as Vyasa. They named them '*Puranas*' which means ancient scriptures. *Swamiji* says (*Dayananda Granthamala*, I, 431):

“During the time of Raja Bhoj some pundits wrote *Markandeya Purana* and *Shiva Purana* in the name of Vyasa. When Bhoj learnt of this fraud, he punished the pundits and ordered that, in future, if someone wrote a book he must write it in his own name, not in the name of the ancient sages. This is recorded in Raja Bhoj's historical work *Sanjiwani*. This book is with the Tiwari *Brahmans* of Bhind, a village in the state of Gwalior. In the same book it is written that the sage Vyasa wrote the original *Mahabharata* in 4400 verses. His disciples added another 5600 thereby making it a work of 10,000 verses. During the time of King Vikramaditya it rose

to 20,000 shlokas. By the time of Bhoj's father, the work grew to 25,000 and by the time of Bhoj it rose to 30,000 verses. (We now know that it is a work of 1,00,000 verses and in about half of the work there is a description of various rituals and the authority of the priests.) Raja Bhoj's work, *Sanjiwani*, was seen by the Rao Saheb of Lakhuna and his agent Ram Dayal Chaube personally. Raja Bhoj further says that if books like the *Puranas* were written in the name of the *Rishis*, the people of Arya-Vartta would lose the *Vaidic* tradition and fall into error and superstition.”

This is how the *Puranas* were written. The evidence is clear and reliable. But so deep is the impact of ritual, belief and superstition, and so strong is the hold of religious institutions and organizations that the voice of reason is stifled unless it fights very hard against the power of money and vested interest.

One grave consequence of the loss of *Vaidic* tradition was that the one omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent God was misrepresented by superstitious people in the form of different gods, each god belonging to a sect or community or even a household. The infinite spirit of the universe was confined to an idol of wood or stone. It was easy to please this lifeless god with a pinch of sweet.

Behind the many images of God is the belief that he is sakara, not nirakara, that is, God has a form, He is not formless, that God is a super person who is the creator, managing director and sole proprietor of the world. And when the world goes wrong, he comes down from his favourite abode to the earth and destroys the evil-doers. Thus there is Narayana with his consort in the Milky Ocean, Shiva with Parvati on Mount Kailas, Vishnu in the Land of the Cow, and so on. There are gods in human form too: Rama with Sita, Krishna with Radha (not his wife Rukmini), and Hanuman whose sole aim is to serve Rama. There are temples dedicated to them with priests and devotees, all worshipping the god of their choice. There are humans such as Sahajanand and other human gurus raised to the status of gods and worshipped as gods. There are man-made scriptures such as *Vishnu Purana*, *Shiva Purana*, *Devi Bhagwat* and *Shrimad-Bhagwat*. *Swamiji* gives evidence to show that *Shrimad-Bhagwat* was written by Pandit Bop Dev and not by Maharshi Vyasa.

Thus the one universal God was divided into many, the one original universal scripture was replaced by many books and one humanity and one nation was divided into many sects, because one universal *Dharma* was diversified into various creeds.

On the authority of the *Vedas* and on grounds of logic, *Swamiji* rejects the view that the infinite and omnipresent God can be confined into a body-form. God is one, not many. No one born in human or any other body-form can be God. Rama and Krishna were great heroes of exceptional order, but no human being, hero or guru, can be God. We should respect, honour and reverence great men, but God alone is to be worshipped as God. The *Veda* itself says that God is unborn (*aja*) and without body-form (*akaya*). If there is a form which reflects God, it is the universe alone.

There is a long debate in *Satyarth Prakash* on idol worship. It is summarized here:

### **Idol Worship:**

Q. How and where did idol worship start?

A. With the Jains, and then came the Greeks. The Jains had their prophets in human form. Hence they worshipped them in form as supermen and divine.

Q. The Jain idols are peace-incarnate. Contemplate them and you get peace.

A. An idol is dead. You need living peace, so contemplate the living universal presence.

Q. God is formless. You cannot contemplate the formless. Hence the idol.

A. From the creation of God, you can contemplate His presence every- where, because the creator is everywhere. In fact, if you feel the presence everywhere you live a life of virtue and honesty because you feel that God is watching you every moment. He is in you too.

Q. We stand before the image and chant the name.

A. Chanting is an exercise of the tongue. Instead, contemplate the attributes of God and concentrate on living according to the attributes. That would be practical worship. For example, God is just. Remember this and be just in every word and act. That is the right worship.

Q. Actually we do not worship the idol of wood or stone. We worship the God in the idol. We feel that God is there. Wherever you feel, God is there.

A. The universal presence cannot be contained in the idol. If you have to feel the presence, feel it in the universe. But if your feeling creates the object of your feeling, take a handful of dust and feel that it is sugar. Will it turn sweet for you? Feeling should be realistic, not imaginary.

Q. No, not this way. We invoke the God with *mantra*.

A. God is nowhere absent. He does not have to move. He is everywhere but He is beyond the reach of the senses. You cannot call Him. So worship Him within your soul, feel him everywhere and live in the presence.

Q. Idol worship is good for the beginners. It is at least the first step. And there is no harm, nor any sin.

A. In *dharma*, there are do's and don'ts. The *Veda* prohibits idol worship because it says that there is no image of God. If you create an image of God and worship it, it is a violation of *Vaidic* teaching. It is sin.

Q. If you concentrate on the image, your mind does not wander.

A. It does wander from one part of the image to another. But if you contemplate on the infinite, it does not wander because it cannot go away from the infinite.

Q. There is Panchayatan worship which means worship of five gods - *Shiva, Vishnu, Ambika, Ganesh* and *Surya*. We worship the images of these gods.

A. People don't understand the meaning of *Panchayatan*. The meaning is 'the five in body form' and the five are mother, father, teacher, the visitor and the wife/husband. A householder should do proper service to these five. That is *Panchayatan Puja*. '*Puja*' here means honour and hospitality, not the worship of God.

In an intelligent society dedicated to God and life, what we need is knowledge of truth and the difference between truth and falsehood, science, peace and balanced attitude between the love of the world and dedication to God (*Viveka, Vairagya, Vigyan and Shanti*). For want of an intelligent pursuit of *Vaidic* knowledge and *dharma*, Indians fell a victim to ignorance and suffered at the hands of a whole class of priests, lazy, idle, indolent and beggarly, waiting for gifts in the name of God.

This kind of ignorance and indolence became the target of attack by the Christian missionaries and British political educationists.

### **The Miracles:**

There are miracles say the priests: Lat Bhairava repulsed the army of Aurangzeb with millions of hornets. Shiva did not want to give a vision of himself to an evil ruler, so he hid himself in a well. Beni Madhav hid himself in a *Brahman's* house. The dead ancestors receive propitiating offerings at Gaya by actually extending their hands. Lord Jagan Nath's car moves by itself. The Somnath Linga is suspended in the air, no support anywhere. Jwala Mukhi flame is perpetual, it cannot be put out. These are all miracles of the Lord, mysteries of the divine.

*Swamiji* says that they are all inventions of the priests plus ignorance of the simpletons. Why did the Lord of this mighty universe, fear an invader and flee to hide himself? The hiding was an act of the priests. The dead ancestors' hands are a fiction. *Swamiji* met a person who had served Jagan Nath temple for twelve years. The person told him that all the reports were false. Som Nath Linga was suspended by magnetic force, and Jwala Mukhi is a flame of natural gas. Nothing in the world can be outside the laws of nature. Whatever appears as miracle appears as miracle because we don't understand the law. Our limitation becomes our condition and superstition becomes truth for us.

An elaborate machine of fear, anger, expiation and appeasement, indulgence and forgiveness has been created: Human beings suffer the anger of stars and planets for no fault of theirs. The stars and planets must be appeased with gifts of cash and kind to the priest. Even the sun and moon suffer the wrath of Rahu and Ketu in eclipse for one error they committed. The sun and moon must be rescued from the demons otherwise the effects on humanity will be bad, again with gifts to the priests. As an insurance of future well-being there are holy places: Haridwar, Prayag and others, all gateways to heaven. Bath there and gifts to the priests, and you are absolved of your sins. If you don't visit these holy places, there is Yama, the god of death. He holds a regular court of justice with full staff and office record. After death, every soul has to pass through Baitarani, a terrible hot, fetid and impetuous river full of blood and bones and hair, before it reaches the abode of *Yama*. If a cow is gifted to a *Brahman*, the dead catches hold of its tail and crosses the river. Ultimately there is the *Garuda Purana*. Have it recited by a priest, give him generously, and the dead man is saved.

*Swamiji* says it is all exploitation. None can save anyone else. The law of *Karma* rules, good deeds alone can save you. The stars and planets are natural bodies. The eclipses are natural phenomena. The real tirthas are acts which are positive and good. Reading and reciting of *Vedas* and other good literature of truth, the company of virtuous and scholarly people, social service, charity, pursuit of *Dharma*, *Yoga* practice, love, simplicity, observance of *Brahmacharya*, prayer, and the service of mother, father, teacher, senior persons, guests and other visitors, scientific attitude and compassion - these are tirthas, because these help us in the journey of life. Give in charity to the simple, truthful, contented, steady do-gooders, people who work for social causes, not to the clever, selfish, sensual, lazy, arrogant and revengeful pretenders. This is *Swamiji's* view of holy places and acts of charity.

*Dharma* is a living force and a dynamic philosophy of life. It is not a matter of mere form. Interested people reduce it to mere form. Look at the following stories from *Bhaktamal*:

Parikal was a devout Vaishnava. He was a robber. One day he failed to find a victim. So Narayana decided to help his devotee and, disguised as a rich man travelling in a chariot, he met him on his way. Parikal robbed him of everything except that he could not remove his ring from the finger. He snapped the finger. Narayana was pleased and appeared to him in the full divine form. Paikal offered the entire loot to the Vaishnava priests.

Again: A Parikal was employed as a servant by a trader on his ship. The ship had rich cargo of supari (betel nuts). Parikal had half a piece of supari. He requested the trader for permission to load his half-supari in the ship. The trader agreed and permitted. Parikal persuaded him to give in writing that half supari was his. On the destination Parikal claimed half of the supari cargo and got it by law. But He did not get the loot, Parikal offered the loot to the Vaishnava priests.

Another: A *Vaishnava* was sleeping under a tree. He died in sleep. Up above was a crow. The droppings of the crow fell on the dead man's forehead and formed as the holy mark of 'tilaka'. On death, the attendants of the court of Yama descended to take him. Immediately came the servants of Lord Narayana because the tilaka was a mark of the Lord's devotee. They prevailed over Yama's force and took the man straight to heaven.

Such is the power of form and the value of charity, according to the holiness of the priests.

The priest, the *Brahman*, the guru became gods. It was said, "The world is subject to the gods, the gods are subject to *mantra*, the *mantras* are subject to *Brahmana*, therefore the *Brahmana* is the god of gods." The guru of the Vallabha sect received direct revelation from Lord Krishna, it is claimed. The disciple who surrenders everything to the guru is absolved of all the sins committed or weaknesses contracted from any place, at any time. The disciple has no right to anything whatsoever unless it is first offered to the guru. This way of life is called Pushtimarga, the way of hedonism with no holds barred.

### **The Reaction:**

There was a reaction to this way of 'gurudom' and authoritarianism: Man has a direct relation to God; God is in the heart of everyone, why not approach Him direct, why through an agent?

There was Kabir. He was born in an ordinary home and brought up by a weaver. He tried to read *Sanskrit*, but the pundit refused to teach a boy of low caste. So Kabir composed simple verses and songs. He rejected ritual and preached simple devotion to the simplest folk. They listened and followed him. But Kabir had no education, so while he rejected the priests, he failed to relate his devotion to the purity of *Vaidic* knowledge and tradition. The 'Kabir panthis' too became a sect as closed as any other sect with the institution of the guru and their own scripture in popular language. They also created some kind of mythology around Kabir: He was born of flowers, and ended in flowers on death.

Guru Nanak Dev was another simple, pious and spiritual man who rejected empty ritual and priestly authoritarianism. He refuted idol worship and saved many people from converting to Islam. His followers too became a sect by themselves within the main stream of the country. He taught the following *mantra*:

"He whose name is truth is the creator of the universe, the all-pervasive Being who is loving and free from fear. He is beyond the reach of time. He is never born and he is the all-glorious Being.

Worship Him. May your guru help you to do so. That supreme spirit was in the beginning of creation, is in the present and shall be in the future" (*Japuji*, 1). This is the voice of vision.

Inspiration, voice and vision is great, but if the voice can arouse the magnificent volume of the voice across time, that would be greater. Guru Nanak Dev's limitation was that he had not studied *Sanskrit* and the *Vedas*. Therefore he could not fully appreciate the wisdom of the *Vedas* and the purity of *Vaidic* tradition. What he preached as quoted above was the *Vaidic* view of God, still here and there we miss that proper homage to the *Vedas* which is due in comparison with the authority of the saint:

"*Brahma* read the *Vedas*, but the end of him was death. The four *Vedas* are but fiction. The *Vedas* do not know the greatness of the saint. Nanak says that one who knows God is himself God."(Sukhmani, Pauri 7, 8). An ordinary disciple is likely to feel that this voice is a substitute for the Original Voice of the Adi Guru (the *Vedas*), which was not the intention of Guru Nanak Dev. Any spiritual voice is an echo of the Original Voice, but it needs to be such loud and clear. In fact, Guru Nanak Dev himself had said that the four *Vedas* are the voice of *Brahma*, the Supreme Lord. But the words quoted above dilute that supremacy.

Had Guru Nanak Dev read the *Vedas*, he could have been a saviour of the great tradition. But his followers, for want of the traditional link, tended to form a sect. He perfected a new above. After his death, the sect of Udasis originated with his son, while that of Nirmalas, with Ram Das. With the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, the disciples became Sikhs, a potent, militant force for the defence of the *Vaidic* tradition symbolized by the cow, the *Brahmana*, the top hair and the sacred thread - the Hindu tradition. Guru Gobind Singh rejected the authoritarianism of gurudom, got the songs of the saints collected, gave it the title of *Guru Granth* and installed the Granth as the Guru.

The result of this militant institutionalization was that the onslaught of the aliens was stemmed. But in due course, the sect tended to separate from the mainstream and many claim to be a non-Hindu minority in the very country of their birth and their Hindu forefathers. Neither Guru Nanak Dev nor Guru Gobind Singh ever dreamt of such tendencies. If the Sikh gurus had held on to the original *Vaidic* revelation and corrected the errors that had crept in, this tendency would have been avoided.

Guru Gobind Singh gave the Sikhs a distinct identity by prescribing that they must wear the five K's: Kaccha (underwear), Kara (steel bangle), Kirpana (dagger), Kanga (comb) and Kesh (unshorn hair). These were sacred marks of courage, service and sacrifice at that turbulent time of history. But whether they are permanent symbols of spiritual conversion and constant renewal or marks of communal identity against general assimilation with the main stream at a time of political tension is a subject for serious consideration.

One result of the historical development of various sects has been that different religious symbols, texts and gurus have divided the Indian nation into separate communities. Even the sects which worship the same lord of the universe (*Ishwara*) with attributive names *Vishnu*, *Shiva*, etc., have created different mythologies known as *Puranas* and now have mutually conflicting views of the gods of their choice and their power. The result is the division of one nation into sects and communities. Some critics even say that *Hinduism* is no religion, since there is no one book, no one ideology.

### **The British Phase: the Christian Challenge:**

*Hinduism* suffered the worst attack at the hands of the British trading invaders, their force being Christianity and English education. The missionaries and the educationists asserted that whatever was left of *Hinduism* was stupid. The missionaries advanced the idea of one God, the educationists asserted reason, science and progress. Next, they identified Christianity with reason, science and

progress. They condemned *Hinduism* as superstition, exploited the division of one community into sects, and easily divided the people and ruled. Many Indian young men attracted by employment and inspired by the gospel of free thought and progress converted to Christianity. Many revolted as in 1857. Others felt compelled to think and adapt to the circumstances. *Swami* Dayananda challenged, his inspiration being the *Vedas* and the universal human *dharma*.

Those who adapted to the new circumstances were people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen and others. Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the *Brahma* Samaj, others founded the Prarthana Samaj. They called these the modern versions of *Hinduism*, both meant to meet the Christian challenge.

*Swamiji* studies both. He appreciates both: They saved people from converting to Christianity and protected them against exploitation by the sectarian gurus. They also rejected idol worship and elaborate ritual. But they were just like Hindu versions of Christianity. In fact some Christian fathers really felt that Raja Ram Mohan Roy had converted to Christianity and the Raja had to deny it. *Swamiji* says:

1. The *Brahma* Samajis and the Prarthana Samajis had no patriotic love for India. They adopted the manners of the Christians and changed their rules of marriage and food habits.
2. They denigrated India and their forefathers, praised the Christian Englishmen in their lectures, ignored the Indian saints and sages and described the Indians as ignorant and backward throughout their past history.
3. They did not acknowledge the wisdom of the *Vedas* but, among the saints of the world, accepted Moses, Christ, Mohammad, Nanak and Chaitanya, ignoring all the *Rishis* of India.

Then *Swamiji* strikes a patriotic note: They are born in India, their forefathers were born in India. They eat the food produced in India and drink the water of the Indian streams. Yet they disown the ways of their forefathers, ignore the ancient literature and tradition of their country, admire the foreigners, their culture and their language and, ignorant of the vast store-house of *Sanskrit* knowledge, they proclaim the superiority of English language and learning over everything Indian. All this means lack of self-confidence and national pride. Some people feel that the Englishmen have progressed so much because they wear shoes, coat and trousers, and eat without any discrimination with all and from all.

*Swamiji* says that the real secret of success and progress of the Englishmen is not their outward manners and habits. It is wrong to say that if we adopt their habits and manners, we too will progress. Their secret lies in hard work, discipline, obedience to the officers, love of their culture and tradition, no early marriage, marriage by choice and consent at the proper time, decision by discussion and mutual agreement, patriotism and national pride. Anybody will progress if he/she works honestly with discipline for the common good. But the Englishmen too have discrimination. If an Englishman or woman marries outside his/her community or religion, they do not accept it. This is sheer discrimination.

*Swamiji* believes in one human community, one *dharma* of universal values, one code of ethics across the world, one culture and universal progress. He suggests that some ruler should call an interfaith conference of all the religions--Pauranic, Jain and Buddhist, Christian and Islamic. Let them all say what is *dharma* and what is *a-dharma*. Wherein they all agree, that would be *dharma* and that would surely be in agreement with the *Vedas*. Wherein they don't agree that would not be

*dharma*. Infect *dharma* and *a-dharma* both imply a single code of universal values. For example, truth, knowledge, justice, general welfare and happiness, *Brahmacharya* and discipline, learning together, positive and creative hardwork, love for all-- this is *dharma*. The contrary is *a-dharma*. If people are rational and objective in thought, free from favour, prejudice or selfishness, and interested in common good and progress, they would think alike and dharmically, and what they think would be universal-- and that would be the *Vaidic* way. So confident was *Swamiji* of the essential goodness of human nature, and so deep was his faith in the universal truth of the *Vedas*. His suggestion of a world conference of religions so that humanity could adopt a common code of universal values was a unique challenge to the most modern people of his time.

*Swamiji* gives a list of the rulers of *Indraprastha* from Yudhishtira upto Prithvi Raj Chauhan/Yashpal until the invasion of Shahabuddin Ghauri of Ghazni when India fell to the foreigners. *Swamiji* got this historical list from the editor of a fortnightly journal *Harish-Chandra-Chandrika* and *Mohan-Chandrika* (samvat 1939, Marga Shirsha, Shukla Paksha, 19-20 Kiran), which was published from Nath Dwara in Udaipur State, Rajasthan. The Editor got this account from a manuscript dated Samvat 1782. (1725 AD)

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that about forty years ago a similar account was published in the *Statesman* (New Delhi), based on research conducted by Punjabi University, Patiala (Punjab). I wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Statesman* stating what *Swamiji* had written in *Satyarth Prakash*. This letter too was published. The findings of Panjabi University were similar to *Swamiji's* account of post-*Mahabharata* history. This shows how authentic *Swamiji's* sources of information were.

We may now summarize *Swamiji's* views of the post-*Mahabharata* history of India:

1. Departure from *Vaidic Dharma*, ignorance, neglect and misinterpretation of the *Vedas*,
2. Adoption of different sectarian beliefs, practices, superstitions and ways of worship, all distanced from the *Vedas*, real life and the new challenges of the time,
3. Disunity of the nation, onslaughts of foreigners and the loss of freedom,
4. Slavery, and exploitation by foreign powers,
5. Further deterioration of character and national pride under the influence of conversion and an alien system of education.

Solution: Rebuilding of character through the *Vaidic* way of education and life, national reorganization, planning and creative hardwork in a comity of nations, thereby subscribing to one international human family--enlightened, cooperative, just, prosperous, peaceful and free citizens of the globe.

## CHAPTER 12

### Atheistic Sects

*Swamiji* studies the development of atheistic sects in India in a spirit of love, justice and friendship in the interest of truth - the search for truth being the end and aim of human life. He takes up *Charwak*, *Buddhism* and *Jainism*.

#### **Charwak:**

The founder of *Charwak* was *Brihaspati*. He did not believe in God and the *Vedas*. Nor did he believe in the *Yajnas* and other rituals such as '*Shraddha*' (propitiation of the dead). He did not believe in the soul. But he believed in the world as it is. He believed that direct perception by the senses was the only proof of truth and reality.

*Charwak* believes in direct perception only and say that the world is real as it is. It has ever been as it is and it ever remains as it is. It is what it is by nature, not because it has been so created by God. In fact, there is no God. Indeed, there is no soul either. The world is material, it is governed only by the laws of nature. The body is a compound of materials, and as the materials compound, consciousness emerges, and that is called soul by people who believe in such a thing. In reality, consciousness is a state of nature. When the body materials disintegrate on death, consciousness also disappears. The end of the body is the end of life. There is no future life. Life is only as long as the body lasts. There is no heaven, no hell; there is no pain, no pleasure, beyond this life. Therefore, make hay while the sun shines: enjoy the pleasures of life as much as you can. Pleasure is the ultimate value.

*Swamiji* studies *Charwak* steadily, wholly and critically in the historical perspective. He says that *Charwak* was a reaction to the orgies of Vam-Marga and the excesses of priest-craft.

Both *Vam-Margis* and the priests had neglected the study of the *Vedas*. They ignored the purity of *Vaidic* knowledge, misinterpreted the language of the *Vedas*, created myths, institutions and cruel practices and exploited the simple folk who fell victims to their craft. They created a system of ritual, cruel and elaborate, neglected practical living and showed visions of future fear. The *Charwaks* revolted. They argued: If you kill an animal for *Yajna*-sacrifice saying that the victim goes to heaven, why don't you sacrifice your father or mother? If you cook food for the dead ancestors, eat it and say that the food reaches the dead in the other world, why don't you send food to your friends and relatives in other places? They brought the argument down to logic and nature.

*Swamiji* accepts this logic. But, at the same time, he rejects the end results of this logic. He says that the world of nature is material, it has no will, no intention and no purpose in itself. It is void of consciousness. It cannot come into operative existence by itself. It can be brought into such existence only by a universal, conscious, omnipotent agent. That agent is God. Therefore, to deny the existence of God is an error of the extreme order. Nor can the world be as it is forever. Things come into existence and they die out. So the world too comes into existence and goes out of existence, and the agent of both creation and destruction is God. The soul too is a reality independent of the body. It is an entity which is different from the body not in degree but in kind. The body is a living body as long as the soul is there, it dies and disintegrates when the soul leaves it. If you believe in direct perception only as the basis of knowledge, there must be an agent of perception, and that agent is the soul. It is the soul which perceives, knows, acts and enjoys as well as suffers. It is eternal, hence there is a future life as there was a past life too. The soul moves from one life to another according to the law of *Karma*, and God is the ordainer of the law.

According to *Swamiji* the *Charwaks* made a mistake equal in gravity to that of the priests. The priests had failed to understand *Vaidic* truth and Vitiated the *Vaidic dharma*. The *Charwaks* failed to understand the misinterpretation and vitiating *dharma* to the other extreme as they rejected the *Vedas*. The result was that the *Charwaks* went off as far from truth and *dharma* as the priests and the *Vam Margis*. Had the *Charwaks* gone to the *Vedas*, understood the eternal truth and wisdom, and known the reality of life and the world, they would not have lost themselves in mere revolt but would have enlightened themselves. Revolt should mean reform, and reform should mean restoration of life to its original purity and balance of rhythm. The *Vedas* are the eternal, original and constant frame of reference for our life, thought and living. They provide the constant centrality. Whenever in the course of history life moves away from the centre, we must refer our thought and living back to the *Vedas* and, upfront from there, restore the balance. The *Charwaks* failed in that exercise of reform, one of the reasons being that they failed to acknowledge that there are proofs of truth and reality beyond *Pratyaksha* (direct evidence). According to *Swamiji*, as according to *Darshan* philosophy, these proofs are inference, authority (i.e., the *Vedas* and the saints and sages) and spiritual vision in the state of *samadhi*. *Swamiji* restored this balance of thought and practical living by referring to the *Vedas* through his vision which could see across the fluctuations of history.

### **On Buddhism:**

Between *Charwak* and *Buddhism* there is difference: *Buddhism* accepts inference (*Anumana*) in addition to direct perception as the ground of experience and reality. While *Charwak* is downright materialistic and hedonist, *Buddhism* accepts the world as well as experience but as flux, merely momentary. *Charwak* finds fulfilment in sense-experience, *Buddhism* believes in the elimination of experience to the point of zero for fulfilment. While *Charwak* is at one extreme from the *Vaidic* vision, *Buddhism* is at the other extreme. *Charwak* accepts solid reality, *Buddhism* rejects it.

There are four basic points of faith in *Buddhism* as given in *Viveka Vilasa*:

- I. Lord Buddha, the lord of wisdom and enlightenment,
- II. The world is nothing more than flux,
- III. *Arya Sattva*, i.e., the human psyche, and
- IV. Experience (*Akhya*).

I. **The Lord** is the master of knowledge, he is above all love and hate, above all involvement with the world. He knows and tops all that which others before him knew. He speaks of the realities of the world. His word is knowledge, his word is law, *Dharma*. The Buddhists must accept him and his word.

II. **The world** according to *Buddhism* is only appearance, everything that appears is a flux, the ultimate reality of it is *Shunya*--void, zero.

There are four different schools of reality in *Buddhism*:-

1. *Madhyamika* which believes that all that is void. Everything that appears to be in existence is nothing but flux, even that which appears for a moment and then it is no more. Even the momentary appearance is a fluctuation of the mind. Therefore the only reality that is *Shunya*--void, zero.

2. *Yogachara* which believes that the external world does not really exist, it is *Shunya*, a void. But the inner world of the mind is, but that too is nothing more than flux. This inner mental reality, however, corresponds with the external appearance in every detail including shape and size.
3. *Sautrantika* believes that whatever seems to exist outside cannot be known except by inference, and what you see is the appearance. The reality is unknown and unknowable.
4. *Vaibhashika* believes that you experience only that which appears as outside reality, inside there is nothing in the mind. But all that appears outside is a flux.

**III. *Arya Sattva***, the psyche is the experiencer, but this too in reality is *Shunya*, nothing. It is a flux of experience, each experience being momentary. One moment and one experience has nothing to do with any other.

**IV. *Akhya*** is forms of experience giving us the feeling of the various forms of reality and their effect on the mind.

This world of experience or experience of the world has the following categories of form:

1. *Rupa* or form which is perceived, which does not, of course, mean the essential reality of the thing.
2. *Vijnana* or cognition of the form on perception, so that you know what you are perceiving. For example, if you see a book on the table you know that it is the book-- yours or someone else's.
3. *Vedana* or feeling is the emotional response on your cognition of the thing. For example, if you see the book on the table, you feel happy that you have got back the book you had lent to somebody.
4. *Sanjna* or name is the word for the object you see. For example, when you see an animal you know whether it is a dog or a cow. Thus there are two levels of the world of appearance: the things and their names, or the world and the corresponding language.

In addition, there is the world of feeling, of pleasure and pain.

5. *Sanskara* or impressions and appetencies which arise from experience and feeling. These are love, hate, suffering, desire, pride, ambition, indifference, *dharma* (virtue), *adharma* (vice), etc. All this is involvement and it causes the cycle of *Karma*.

From experience, feeling and involvement arises suffering. *Buddhism* thus comes to the four great religious truths of its system of thought:

1. The world is void in the essence, a flux in existence, and suffering in experience. It is *dukha* (pain).
2. If there is suffering, there must be a cause for it - that cause is involvement.
3. If there is cause, there is remedy too.

4. The remedy is right attitude to the world. You should know that it is all a flux, an appearance. All experience is fluctuation of the mind. Eliminate the fluctuations, be free, which means a return to the void, that state is *Moksha, nirvana*.

*Swamiji* examines the Buddhist system of thought against the *Vaidic* frame of reference, the original and eternal wisdom of the world.

1. If Lord Buddha is the teacher, who was the guru of Lord Buddha? *Swamiji* says that God is the first Guru of mankind, being the Guru of the first gurus of humanity. So to accept Lord Buddha as the sole teacher without faith in God is to be unrealistic and going against the facts of existence. Revelation of knowledge by God to the first *Rishis* is a fact of cosmic history and universal psychology.

2. *Swamiji* takes up the Buddhist idea of the world being a flux: If everything is a flux, there must be someone or some reality that knows that it is all a flux. Thus there must be at least two entities, the knower who knows the flux and the known (which is the existence other than the knower). If there are at least two, how can everything be Shunya (void or zero or nothing)? Further, all cannot be flux, because, first, the knower must be constant, and, secondly, the flux implies that there is something which is in flux. Still further, if the mind too is a flux, how can there be any memory of anything? The memory and also the thing remembered must be things more than flux because they are both realities more than momentary.

3. The psyche then is a permanent and eternal entity. It is the soul which is the knower, the doer, the enjoyer and the sufferer. It is the soul which is involved in the karmic cycle and which, having controlled the flux of the fluctuations in the mind, becomes free in the state of *Moksha*. If we accept the Buddhist idea of all-void and all-flux, even *Moksha* would be momentary as flux. *Moksha* too is a long lasting state of bliss as explained in chapter IX of *Satyarth Prakash*.

The Buddhists believe in *Dwadashayatan*, twelve-fold abode of the psyche--five organs of sense (*jnanendriyas*), five organs of volition (*karmendriyas*), mind and intellect. These must be worshipped, i.e., looked after and kept satisfied with reverence. *Swamiji* says that if these twelve are to be worshipped, why not the worship of the *Pranas* and the soul? He says that God alone is the object of worship. If the Buddhists worship objects of nature, there is no difference between the Buddhists and the materialists.

*Swamiji* does not agree with the Buddhists' perception of the world as the house of suffering. If the world were a house of suffering, none would have any love for it and none would like to mitigate suffering and improve the world. The world, in fact, is a place of happiness as well as of suffering. You are happy or unhappy according to your will and action. The world is good, on its own. If you participate in the system creatively, with self-confidence, love and compassion, you are happy here and hereafter.

The world is real. It has two dimensions, constant and variable. *Ishwara* (God) is constant, *Prakriti* is basically constant but variable during the age of creation, and the soul is constant but, in association with *Prakriti*, it gets involved and fluctuates with the fluctuations of the mind. If the soul abides in itself and acts under the protective shade of God, everything is fine.

**Jainism:**

Jains are disciples of *Jina* as Buddhists are disciples of Buddha. *Swamiji* says that Buddhists and Jains are two branches of one stream of post-*Mahabharata* development of *Dharma*. He says that Buddha and *Jina* are synonyms. He quotes from *Amarakosh*, a dictionary of *Sanskrit* synonyms:

*Sarvajna, Sugata, Buddha, Dharmraja, Tathagata,  
Samantabhadra, Bhagavan, Marajit, Lokajit,  
Jina, Shadabhijna, Dashabala, Advaya-vadi,  
Vinayaka, Munindra, Srighana, Shasta, Muni,  
Shakyamuni, Shakyasinha, Sarvartha, Siddha,  
Shaudhodani (the son of Shuddhodana), Gautama,  
Arkabandhu, son of Mayadevi (Amarakosha, 1, 1, 8-10)*

These are all synonyms, names of the same one person. *Swamiji* further quotes from Raja Shiv Prasad's *Itihas Timir-Nashak* that Bauddhas and Jainas are the names of one non-*Vaidic* stream of religion, the difference being that the Buddhists can take meat and drink liquor while the Jainas do not. In fact, Mahavir and Gautam were both ganadhars. The Buddhists call them Buddha, and the Jains are not outside of them. They are one.

*Swamiji's* view with the evidence of *Amarakosh* and Raja Shiv Prasad's *Itihas Timir Nashak* is a subject for research by historians.

The Buddhists and the Jains believe in the same paradigms of reality, more or less the same. The Buddhists believe in *Akasha* (Ether), *Kala* (Time), *Jiva* (Soul), and *Pudgala* (Matter), all in a flux. The Jains believe in two more, *Dharma* and *Adharma*. *Adharma* is the cause of the fluctuations of the *Jiva* (soul) in association with matter, while *Dharma* is the cause of the stillness of the *Jiva*-and-matter. *Pudgal* is subtle, eternal and constant, and yet variable and perishable, it is the material cause of all the forms. *Akasha* is that which is the spatial cause of all the forms and their movement. *Jiva* is the conscious entity, capable of cognition and perception, which gets involved with the fluctuations of material objects of sense. As such it is the doer and the sufferer. *Swamiji* observes that, of these six, *Dharma* and *Adharma* are not substances because they are the property (*guna*) of *Jiva*, and the other four, being substantial realities, are not momentary events in a flux, they are real, constant and eternal--not perishable.

### **The Existence of God:**

Except for these differences, the Jains as the Buddhists do not believe in a reality such as God, the creator and sustainer of the universe. God is not their object of worship. The souls in the state of perfection are their gods and these they worship. One who knows everything perfectly, has risen above all involvements with the world, exists in the pure and exclusive state of the spirit, such a soul is Arhan, Tirthankrita, *Jina* that is the object of worship. He is in the state of *Moksha*, he has achieved godhood. The highest virtue is *Viveka*, a state of discrimination in which the *Jiva* can distinguish the soul from the non-soul, i.e., the material world. The man who knows, accepts the acceptable and gives up the unacceptable, such a person has attained *Moksha* and godhood. Other than such souls, there is no God.

*Swamiji* does not accept this position. He does not accept the argument by which the Jains reject the existence of God. The Jains say that there is no direct evidence (*Pratyaksha*) of the existence of God. If there is no direct evidence, there cannot be any inference. And if there is neither direct evidence nor inference there cannot be any authority such as the *Vedas* (which are said to have been revealed by God). *Swamiji* agrees that God is not an object of direct evidence by the senses. But he says that just as you cannot perceive form with the ear and sound with the eye, you need the eye for the form

and ear for the sound, so you need the right instrument to feel the presence of God. The *Right* instrument to feel the presence of God is a pure soul, right knowledge and the practice of *Yoga*. Of course, there is indirect evidence of God for anybody to see. For example, if there were no God, who made the bodies of the Jain saints? Who created the world? Everything that is created must be created by an intelligent agent, and the intelligent creator of the world is the Omniscient God. Once the direct and indirect evidence of God is acceptable, the authority of Revelation, the *Vedas*, becomes inevitable. Thus the non-acceptance of the existence of God by the Jains is illogical. God is not only an objective and absolute existence, It is also an inner presence. It is the voice of conscience, the innermost reality of human life which no one fails to experience.

The Jain theory of reality including the non-existence of God is given in *Prakaranaratnakara, Part I, Nayana Chakrasara*. *Swamiji* summarizes the Jain debate on God from part II of the same work which was an authorized publication from Bombay:

**Atheist:** Everything happens by *Karma*. Nothing happens by the will of God (because God is non-existent and the will of God is not required for *Karma*).

**Theist:** What is the cause of the law of *Karma* then? If you say that *Karma* is eternal, then the soul will never be free from *Karma*. Consequently, your concept of *Moksha* would be unreal and untenable because the eternal is eternal and indispensable. If you say that *Karma* is annihilated with *Karma*, then the end of *Karma* is the consequence of a cause, and as it has a beginning, it must have an end. Consequently *Moksha* too must end. This dispensation of *Karma, Moksha* and return must have a higher agent, God, to cause and sustain the universal karmic dispensation.

*Karma* is a dispensation, a series of cause and effect in which the *jiva* is caught. The *jiva* enjoys pleasure and reward, and it suffers pain and punishment. Hence there must be a universal intelligence as the Dispenser of the law.

According to the divine law of *Karma*, no human can be God. The human can attain *Moksha* and exist in freedom closest to God. But this freedom of *Moksha* has a beginning, therefore it must have an end too. The human that rises to 'God' according to the Jain view must come back to be human again.

**Atheist:** God is a non-doer, He does nothing. If he does anything, He is involved, not above love and hate.

**Theist:** God is omniscient, supreme Intelligence. Hence His will is supreme. Since He has will, He does the supreme act of creation. He sustains and withdraws the universe. He maintains the law of *Karma*. Being supreme, His love and justice is for all. He is infinite. He is not limited like a human being, who is limited in presence and intelligence. A limited being can feel involved with something limited just as a human being feels involved with another human being or a piece of property. But God being the master of all, He needs to possess nothing, since everything exists in Him. God creates and does everything as it is His nature to create and sustain the universe. He is not involved, He is above everything.

**Atheist:** God is a limited presence even if he exists. If God is present in everything, why is not everything as conscious and intelligent as the human being, for example.

**Theist:** God, being omnipresent, is present in everything. The relation of God and things of the world is that of the pervader and the pervaded. The pervader is not limited but the things pervaded are limited. The pervader and the pervaded are not one. For example, *Akasha* (space) is in everything and everything is in space. Space is in the earth, and the earth is in space. But the earth is not space and the space is not earth, the two are different. Similarly, the pervasive God and the pervaded things are not one and the same, they are different yet together.

**Atheist:** If God is the creator, there need be no father and mother. Why father and mother then?

**Theist:** God is the supreme creator. He creates the universe, but within the universal system there is the sub-system of human creation. The universal system operates universally and the humans do their creative functions within the universal system. The human creation is neither independent of the universal system, nor parallel, nor counter to it. It is a part of God's dispensation. Procreation and family life of parents and children is a part assigned to humans by God within the universal system.

### **The Study State:**

The Jains believe in the steady state of the universe. In *Ratnasara*, chapter "*Samyaktva-Prakash*", there is a dialogue between Gautam and Mahavir which says that "This universe is without beginning and without end. It was never created, nor is it ever destroyed. There is no creator, no destroyer of it. It is as it is, the same for ever."

*Swamiji* observes that the worldly forms are made up of integrated material elements, and the living forms are made up of the union of the soul and material forms. That which is integrated and thus made up is destroyed also. The universe too is a mighty form. It is created, and destroyed also. It cannot be without beginning and without end. Therefore the right and logical thing is to accept, recognize and feel the existence and presence of the creator and creation and live according to the law of the divine dispensation. That which is perceivable by the senses can never be eternal. The creator of the universe is the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Lord who maintains and ultimately destroys it too and creates it again. Thus God is the lord of the cycle of creation, continuation and destruction and creation again. The Jains would be correct according to *Swamiji* if they accepted the cycle as the steady state provided that they were also to accept the omniscient and omnipotent creator. The law of the universe is perfect, and the perfect law cannot operate unless there is a conscious agent of infinite power and intelligence behind it. No law can be a force unless there is a conscious power behind it to bring it into operation.

Here a question is raised: If there is a creator of the universe, who is the creator of the creator? *Swamiji* rejects this question because if there be a creator of the creator, the final answer would not be possible. This question would remain. Hence there is no creator of creator. *Reductio ad infinitum* is *Redutio ad absurdum*.

### **Cosmology:**

The Jain view of the world and specially of the earth is appropriate to the Jain idea of the steady state. According to '*Ratnasara*' (P.152), there are uncountable continents and oceans on the earth. The Jambudveepa (Asia) is in the centre of these continents and its expanse is one billion '*Koshas*' (about two billion kilometers) and the ocean around is two billion '*koshas*' (about four billion kilometers). Around Jambudveepa is the continent of *Dhatakikhanda* whose expanse is four billion *koshas* while the ocean around that is eight billion *koshas* in expanse. Next is the Pushkaravarta continent which is sixteen billion *koshas* in expanse. Half of it is inhabited by humans, and in the other half and beyond, in innumerable oceans, there are creatures of the strangest kind and trees of

terrible size ranging from ten million to forty million *koshas*. Creatures like nit and sea-shells range in size from four *koshas* to ten million *koshas*. The life of the creatures goes upto billions of years. All this account is mind-boggling, but all the same it is there to maintain the idea of the steady state.

In the same vein as this, the Jain scriptures speak of the suns and moons that go round and illuminate our globe. Jambudveepa is illuminated by two suns and two moons. The ocean around it has four suns and four moons. Next, *Dhatakikhanda* has twelve suns and twelve moons. The ocean around that has forty-two suns and forty two moons. Next, Pushkaradveepa has 144 suns and 144 moons, while the ocean around has 492 suns and 492 moons. And this count covers only that region of the globe which is inhabited by humans, the uninhabited regions have many more. *Swamiji* refers to these figures from Shrijinabhadraganikshamashramana's works *Sanghayani*, *Yotisakarandaka Payanna madhye*, *Chandrapayannati*, and *Surpayannati*.

From *Sangrahasutra*, *Swamiji* takes up the Jain view of the chains of suns and moons going round the globe in their orbits. There are four orbits of the suns and moons, two of the suns and two of the moons. Each orbit is 100000 *yojanas* from the next, and in each there are 66 suns and 66 moons. Thus round our own region of habitation there are 132 suns and 132 moons. How is this possible to believe and accept in the modern world? (*Dayananda Granthamala*, I, 583, 623, 624)

### **Mythology:**

Just like the mythology of the *Puranas*, the Jains have created a parallel mythology of their own, celebrating their human gods in the manner of the Avatars. Look at the body and age of the Jain gods, i.e., Tirthankaras, according to Ratnasara I, 166-7: Rishabhadeva's was 500 *dhanush* tall, his age was 84 lakh *purva*-years. (A *dhanush* is three-and-half times the length of a person's arm, and a *purva*-year is equal to 70,56,000 years.) Ajitnatha was 450 *dhanush* tall, his age was 72 lakh *purva* years. Sambhavanatha was 400 *dhanush* tall, his age, 60 lakh *purva* years. And so on until the last and twenty fourth, Mahavira *Swami*, was seven arms tall and his age was 72 years.

There are many other improbabilities: Nagaket lifted a rock as big as a village on his finger (*Kalpabhashya*, P.4). Mahavira pressed the earth with his thumb and the *Shesha* Serpent of the Lord trembled (*ibid*, p.35). A snake bit Mahavira, and milk in stead of blood flowed out. The snake went up to the eighth heaven (*ibid.*, p.46). Rice pudding was cooked on the foot of Mahavira, the foot did not burn (*ibid*, p.47). A camel was called in and contained in a small vessel (*ibid*, p.16). A Damasara mendicant who was a favourite of Mahavira got furious with a city and burnt it to ashes with the chanting of a *mantra*. A dancer filled a flat plate with mustard seeds, covered it with flowers, pierced the flowers with a needle, and danced on the needle without shaking and disturbing the needle or the mustard seeds. A 'Jain saint' lived in with her for twelve years, got initiation from her and went to heaven. The prostitute too observed the Jain way and went to heaven. (*Dayananda Granthamala*, I, 621-2) Even the scarf of a saint gave 500 gold coins to a trader every day!

All these improbabilities are there because a historical religion tries to create faith and raise a class of believers far above the ordinary.

The Jain view of the steady state of the universe is untenable. Similarly their view that all forms and their attributes are beginningless and endless also is untenable. In relation to God everything in existence is finite. Also all the forms and variations of matter are finite. All the forms and all the various kinds of matter have a beginning. Therefore they must have their end also.

The Jains divide the world of existence into *Jiva* (those things which have consciousness) and *Ajiva* (those which have no consciousness). The non-conscious reality consists of atoms which they divide

into good and evil: those atoms which have virtue are good, those which have vice are evil. *Swamiji* agrees with the division into *Jiva* and *Ajiva*, but he does not agree that matter can be good and evil. Good and evil pertain to *Jiva*, a conscious entity, not to matter because matter is neither good nor evil, it is just positive existence.

The Jains believe that the world, *Jiva* (souls), the soul's *Karma* (actions) and bondage (as the result of *Karma*) are beginningless which means that they are eternal.

*Swamiji* examines this view. He says that the world is a structure, a form created from a combination of materials. It cannot be eternal. Of course, the cycle of formation and disformation, integration and disintegration, is eternal. But each round of the cycle has a beginning and the end. Therefore the world as it is cannot be eternal. *Jiva*, of course, is eternal, but its *Karma* and bondage cannot be eternal. If these are eternal, how can the *jiva* be ever free from *Karma* and bondage? But the Jains believe that *Karma* and bondage of the *Jiva* are destroyed when the *Jiva* attains the state of *Moksha*. Something can be either eternal or terminable. It cannot be both. But if the eternal can terminate (as *Karma* and bondage terminate according to the Jain view), then all the eternal are terminable, everything including the world and *jiva*. Surely then the *Moksha* too will terminate, because it is attained with good means, i.e., good *Karmas*. Since the means, being human, are limited in potential, the end result too will be limited. Even the *jiva* is limited in potential, therefore its achievement too will be limited. The relation of *jiva* and *Karma* is perpetual, existentially. Therefore, its bondage and freedom too are *perpetual existentially, but not essentially*. *Karma*, bondage and freedom are ordained by God and governed according to the law of *Karma*.

### **Karma:**

The discussion then moves to the operation of *Karma*. The Jains believe that the cause of bondage is *Karma* itself, wholly and exclusively. There is no need of an agent such as God to subject the *jiva* to the sequence of *Karma*. The *Karma* itself, they say, binds the *jiva*. *Swamiji* says that if *Karma* itself were the cause of bondage, the *jiva* would never voluntarily suffer the evil effects of its *Karma* just as a murderer never mounts the gallows of his own will. Of course the law of *Karma* is operative as a part of the universal law, but the authority behind the universal law is God, the supreme omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent power. For illustration on a limited scale, a ruling government with the judiciary and the police force is the intelligent authority. The law operates but under the authority of the government. This analogy of God and the government of a country does not however mean that God is a policeman or a jailor. God is a power and a presence which is universal. God does not operate from outside of the world, His presence rules from within and his power and law is inviolable.

Let us extend this discussion: Suppose the Jains say that the law of *Karma* too works from within the world, not from the outside. If the Jains say so, the basic difference between this view and *Swamiji's* would still remain: Is the Jain concept of law such that it is not only all powerful but also universally intelligent, so that it is not only self--operative but also self-applied, intelligently and universally? If so, then the law of *Karma* is elevated to a state of existence which integrates omniscience (universal intelligence) omnipotence (universal operation) and omnipresence (universal application). And this would mean belief in God, indirectly and by implication. But the Jains do not believe in any other intelligent existence than *jiva*. Therefore *Swamiji's* objection that the law of *Karma* is Jada (non-intelligent) and it cannot be self-applied stands, it is applicable only through God, the supreme and absolute universal power and presence which governs the universe from within through its presence.

What are the basic tenets of *Jainism*? *Jainism* takes up the basic problem of life: suffering. Life and suffering go together, which means that birth, death and the problems one has to face in the

intervening period, all are variations of suffering. The aim of life is to face these problems and to rise to the state of freedom from these. That state of freedom is *Moksha*.

### **Ethics:**

How does man attain the state of *Moksha*? *Jainism* prescribes:

1. The worship of Arihan-*deva*, the worship of man-gods from Rishabhadeva to Mahavira *Swami*,
2. Reverence to the living guru, the teacher/s of the right *dharma*,
3. *Dharma* as enunciated by the supermen of Jain history,
4. Salutation to the five orders of realized beings, that is, *Pancha-Navakara*,
5. Observance of charitra, i.e., right conduct, and
6. Observance of Vratas, i.e., vows of *ahimsa* (love, tolerance, forbearance, non-violence and humility), *sunrita* (courtesy and sweetness of speech), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (control of the senses, specially control of sex desire) and *aparigraha* (renunciation to the maximum degree).

*Swamiji* explains the principles of *Dharma* from *Arhata Pravachana Sangraha Paramagamanasara*: These are

*Right faith (Samyak Shraddhana)* which means faith in the words of truth and reality spoken by the *Jina* teachers;

*Right vision (Samyak Darshan)* which means correct vision of things and right attitude to them as value;

*Right-knowledge (Samyak Jnana)* which means to know the essential nature of things as explained by the teachers of *Jainism*, and

*Right conduct (Charitra)* which means living strictly and exclusively according to the tenets of *Jainism* and no compromise at all with any other religion.

The term *Pancha Navakara* needs explanation. It is the basic *mantra* of surrender, salutation and worship. It is the *Guru Mantra* of the Jains as the *Gayatri Mantra* is the *Guru Mantra* for other Hindus. The *mantra* is given below:

*Namo Arihantanam Namō Siddhanam Namō Airiyanam  
Namō Uvajjhayanam Namō Loe Sabbasahunam eso  
Pancha Namukkara Sabba Pavappanasano mangalacharanam  
Cha Sabbe Sipadhamam havai mangalam*

The meaning in brief is: Salutations to all the Tirthankaras, salutations to all the realized souls, salutations to all the *Acharyas* (great teachers), salutations to all the teachers and preachers, salutations to all the saints.....

### **Exclusivism:**

*Swamiji* appreciates the positive discipline and vows of *Jainism* (*Granthamala*, I, 591) but he says that the positive merit of this faith is vitiated by self-defence and self-praise through a total

denigration and rejection of other faiths. For example: A Jain may not be able to observe any discipline, may not be able to read anything and may not give anything in charity, still if he has total faith in *Jainism*, he/she attains salvation. The person who says that he/she will study only Jain scriptures and none else attains salvation because those who believe in other scriptures are fallen. The followers of *Jainism* are worthy of respect and reverence, others are not. The Jains should appreciate and praise none other than the believers, no courtesy and communication with others, not even giving of fragrance and flowers for worship except for their own faith. All the Tirthankaras from Rishabha *Deva* to Mahavira *Swami* went to heaven while all the Vasudevas including Krishna went to hell. *Swamiji* states all this from Jain scriptures such as *Prakarana Ratnakara*, *Vivekasara*, and others. (*Granthamala*, I, pp.588-609).

Normally, a historical faith starts as a reform movement against superstition, hypocrisy, ritualism, priest - craft, violence and authoritarianism. It is generally a protest movement for simplicity and sincerity of purpose and practice. Similarly, both *Buddhism* and *Jainism* were a movement against ritualism and priest - craft. But as *Swamiji* shows through his analysis of *Jainism*, *Jainism* itself developed a mythology, superstition and elaborate ritualism of its own. While the worship of the idols of Vishnu and Shiva is rejected because it is said to be the way to hell, the worship of the Jain Tirthankaras is prescribed as the only way to heaven according to *Vivekasara*. In fact, there is a very elaborate process of worship prescribed with all the paraphernalia of ritual. The priest has the privilege of freedom which cannot be disturbed by anybody including the ruler, according to *Ratnasara*. Even to see the image of Parshwanath means that the viewer is cleansed of all his sins. The Jain saints are always worthy of reverence and service even if they are loose of character otherwise. All this shows that *Jainism* has the same order of closeness, sectarianism and exclusiveness which any superstitious faith can have. *Swamiji* is firmly of the opinion that idol worship in *Hinduism* started only with *Jainism*, the medieval *Brahmans* got it from the Jains.

There is a description of heaven in *Ratnasara*: Mahavira Tirthankar says to Gautamiji that in the highest region there is a place called Siddhashila. Over the regions of paradise it is 45 lakh yojans long and as broad and eight yojanas thick. It is whiter than the white pearls of a necklace or cow's milk. It is brighter than gold and more resplendent than crystal. This Siddhashila is on top of the fourteenth loka (region of the world) and on this is the blissful abode called Shivapur. There the emancipated souls live in ethereal spaces far from all suffering and the cycle of birth and death. *Swamiji* quotes from Jain scriptures to show that many Jain saints, even though they lived unholy lives, went to heaven only by virtue of the Jain faith. All this kind of thought creates allurements for the simple unthinking minds. An intelligent person should in fact care for his *Karma* through actual performance and surrender in faithful obedience to God's will and service.

### **Unpractical:**

*Jainism*, says *Swamiji*, is restricted in many practical ways. A faith which claims to be good for all time should be good enough to be pursued in all circumstances through all phases of history and development. *Jainism* prescribes highly unpractical ways of living. *Prakarana Ratnakara* prohibits the pursuit of agriculture, trade and commerce even if you suffer for a life time because these take a person to hell. *Shraddhadinakritya Atmaninda Bhavana* says that no well or tank should be dug and constructed because this work involves violence. *Tatva-viveka* says that a rich man named Nand Manikar got a well constructed, fell from virtue and suffered from sixteen awful ailments. As punishment he was reborn after death as a frog in the same well until by the grace of the sight of Mahavira he died and was reborn again as a divine being called Darduranka. Among acts of sin are included roasting, cooking, grinding and beating of grain and the laying of a garden. All these prescriptions and prohibitions are so unrealistic and difficult that even the Jains find it impossible to follow. Even hair should not be shaved according to Jain ethics, although they are allowed to

remove their hair by uprooting-- which in any case looks like violating the simpler affair of shaving. In short, the Jain ideal of non-violence is unrealistic in the extreme when you come to think of it in life situations.

To sum up: *Jainism* has created a cosmology, theology, mythology and ethics parallel to the *Vaidic* tradition to justify a Godless philosophy. But in doing so, the Tirthankaras and the teachers have created a closed and exclusive society with a self-Righteous way of life. The result in history was that this philosophy was challenged by a revolutionary *Sanyasi*, *Swami Shankaracharya*, who expounded his philosophy of *Navin Vedanta* proving that there is nothing but *Brahma*, *Brahma* being the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe. The cause of this see-saw game of fluctuations in the history of *Vaidic* tradition was that our thinkers and reformers reacted to their immediate religious environment and, in turn, created a system which went to the extreme in the other direction. *Swami* Dayananda looked at the original revelation of *Dharma* and saw the long range of *Vaidic* tradition through all its variations. He caught at the centre of the truth in the *Vedas* and restored the balance of truth, thought and approach. Therefore, again and again, he said: Look at the positive common factor of all religions. This common factor will easily be found to be the universal truth. Whatever is conflicting, will be found as untrue. Looked at this way, a good deal of Jain ethics such as love and non-violence, courtesy and sweetness of speech, mercy, faith, knowledge and vision, truth, *Brahmacharya*, minimization of one's needs and austerity -- provided that they are made universally applicable and extended to all are good things. The Jain doctrine of *Karma* is a part of universal *Dharma*. But all these positive aspects are qualified and compromised by the fact that the Jains refuse to acknowledge the universal omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent *Ishwara* and confine the charity and good behaviour only to their co-religionists.

If we look at the Jain and also the Buddhist way of actual living at the present time, we find that while they try to assert their identity, they cannot resist the pressures of the modern demands of life. They share modern culture and manners with others, and in the context of science and reason share a lot of the ideology of the *Vedas*. However, modern culture too lacks the comprehensive vision of the *Vedas* because, for the time being, it is too concentrated on power and the present moment. *Swami* Dayananda was the man who concentrated on the present but on the basis of universality and insisted that universal values must be realized in every day context of the present time.

## CHAPTER 13

### Christianity

*Swami* Dayananda's life and work was dedicated to the *Vedas*. According to him and all the *Rishis* from *Brahma* to *Jaimini*, the *Vedas* are eternal scriptures of mankind revealed at the dawn of creation. For this reason, the *Vedas* are called *Shruti*, the knowledge received/heard by the *Rishis* at the dawn of cosmic history. According to *Swamiji*, the creator, who is the supreme universal father of all, reveals all knowledge for the benefit of all His children. And, because He is omniscient, his revelation is complete and final. All other works that followed in history on the subject of truth and *dharma* are *Smritis*. While the *Vedas* (*Shruti*) are the articulation of Omniscience in meta-language, the *Smritis* are works of inspired men, saints and sages, recorded in historical language. The *Smritis*, therefore, have a lot of historical element including the language. They do contain eternal truth, of course, but that truth is mixed up with a lot of the historical and geographical elements. *Swamiji* says that the truth-content of all religious books (*Smritis*) is common, but whatever is not common is not universal, it is only true for a time, for a place, for a community. The Bible, the scripture of the Jews and the Christians, is a *Smriti*-work created by men who were great in history in their own right. But *Swamiji* says that, since they were men of history, they were neither wholly divine nor infallible. Historical prophets and historical scriptures have their limitations. This was *Swamiji*'s approach to the Bible.

Besides being a man of the *Vedas*, universal truth and *Dharma*, *Swamiji* was a great patriot too.

When *Swamiji* wrote *Satyarth Prakash*, the English power in India was at its height. The battle of 1857 had been lost. The country had been taken over by the Crown from the Company. English education had been officially introduced in 1835, it was properly organized from 1854 and was being expanded in the 1870's. *Swamiji* had closely watched it all at least for a quarter of the century. The aim of this education was creation of a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, opinions, manners, morals and intellect. It was said: No Hindu boy who has received English education remains sincerely attached to his religion. The plan was that in about thirty years from 1835 there would not be a single idolater in the respectable classes in Bengal. This is what Lord Macaulay wrote to his father in 1836. In 1863, H.H. Wilson, a colleague of Macaulay's, stated before the Select Committee of the House of Lords: English education has created a separate class of scholars who have no longer any sympathy or very little sympathy with their country. Cultural, political and religious conversion of the country for all time, that was the declared aim of English education.

Christianity was the faith of the rulers. The truth and worthiness of a religion was judged by the achievement of its finished products. English- men ruled the country, they were the products of Christianity. Those educated in *Sanskrit* were regarded as little better than beggars, a burden on society, and *Sanskrit* books were described as hardly worth the paper on which they were printed, simply absurd, whatever the branch of knowledge. The Bible was called the Book of Truth, Christianity, the message of success and modernity, and English education, the medium of the message. The Christian fathers and the English educators were all missionaries of the new religious and political faith.

As a patriot, *Swamiji* challenged this, keeping the cool of a *Rishi*'s mind. He did not permit his patriotism to colour his vision of Christianity. He says in the Introduction to *Satyarth Prakash*:

"Although I was born in India and live in it, still I do not defend the wrong doctrines and practices of the religions prevailing in this country, on the contrary I expose them. In like manner, I deal with alien religions. I treat the foreigners in the same way as I treat my own countrymen in recognition of our common humanity."

With this attitude *Swamiji* held a frank dialogue with the Christians, and warned all Indians to beware the missionaries' net and save the simple people from falling a prey.

The basis of *Swamiji's* examination of the Bible is the law of nature, reason and scientific proof. Further, divine knowledge should be truth -- whole and self-consistent. If it is incomplete, partial and self contradictory, it is not truth.

In relation to the Bible we can work out the following bases of the study of *Swamiji's* observations :

God is one. He is the creator, He creates the world from *Prakriti*, the eternal material of all forms of existence, for the *Jivatmas* (souls) which too are eternal.

The cycle of creation-destruction is eternal. There was no such thing as the first creation. All forms of life in every creation are created according to the law of *Karma* which operates in nature and in the life of *Jivatmas*. The law of *Karma* operates under the presiding omnipresence of *Ishwara* (God).

God is the God of all creatures. His family is one, He is good, just and merciful to all equally, and dispenses the fruits of *Karma* to all impartially as a father deals with his children.

God is existent, intelligent and blissful, formless, omnipotent, just, merciful, unborn, infinite, constant and invariable, beginningless, unique and matchless, the main- stay of all, the lord of all, omnipresent, immanent and transcendent, omniscient, ageless, immortal, fearless, eternal, pure and immaculate, the creator of the universe and the one absolute object of worship.

The process of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world and the operation of the laws of nature are one and the same thing. Nothing in the history of the world can violate the laws of nature. No power can suspend the eternal laws of creation.

*Dharma* is the eternal law which holds the world together. *Dharma* is the law which holds humanity too together. Indeed, *Dharma*, Truth, Law, *Karma*, and *Ishwara* (God) are terms which refer to the same one supreme reality which is the creator and preserver of the universe until it is withdrawn into the presence of the same spirit. If a nation claims to have an exclusive God or an exclusive religion, it is living in a world of illusion. If a religion professed by a nation or a section of humanity is in agreement with *Dharma*, i.e., universal law and values, it is true. If it violates the universal values, to that extent it is not true. *Swamiji* studies the truth of the Bible on this simple basis of truth, justice and virtue.

According to *Swamiji* the *Vedas* alone are *Shruti*, that is, the original, eternal and complete revelation of Divine Truth. The rest of scriptural literature is *Smriti*, each *Smriti* being written at some time according to the social context of its own particular age. As far as the *Smriti* is in agreement with the Original Revelation, that is, the *Vedas*, it is true and acceptable, but as far as it departs from the *Vaidic* truth, it is limited to its historical context and not acceptable as universal

truth. The Bible is a *Smriti* and contains a lot of historical material which cannot be regarded as universal truth.

Here we should also make a distinction between *Dharma* (which is *Sanatan/eternal/universal*) and *yuga-dharma* which is good enough for a particular age. *Vaidic Dharma* is *Sanatan* because the *Vaidic* truth is universal. But the universal values have to be realized in every age in their own social, economic and political context. The idiom and form of the realization of those values become the *Yuga Dharma* of that age. When the character of the age changes, a change in the form of the realization of universal values becomes necessary. If, however, the society lacks the dynamism for change, then appears a great man, a hero, a superman who brings about the desired change. The change can come peacefully, it might have to come violently. Such great men are what we call prophets, saviours, '*Maha Purushas*', even '*Avataras*', i.e., those who embody exceptional/divine qualities of supermen. They may be authors of *Smritis* and founders of a reformed faith, or their very life may be regarded as an example of *dharma* for the age. Maharshi Manu, Maharaja Ram Chandra, Yogiraj Krishna, Mahatma Buddha, Mahavira *Swami*, Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, *Swami* Dayananda, *Swami* Vivekananda were all great men in their own right. In the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition Abraham, David, Isaac, Solomon, Moses, Jesus and the Saints and Mohammad have been such people. However, in this tradition too, there is what we might call a sub-tradition, and that is to regard each prophet of one's choice as the last and the final. Against the background of *Swamiji's* thought, no historical prophet can be the final and the last. Time changes, society moves on, new needs arise. How can any age or its message or its prophet be the final and the last? In this tradition too, there is a gap: Adam, the first created man, was the first prophet, but a record of the revelation made to him is not available. We have a reason to ask of the Christians: Where is that? What was that message?

In the language of *Swamiji*, we can regard the Bible as a *Smriti* as well as *Itihas*: So far as the statements of law, ethics, morals and the process of creation are concerned, this part is *Smriti*. But there are historical narrations and descriptions such as the exodus of Moses and his followers from Egypt, the descendants of Abraham, Jesus and the saints, traditions and customs: this part is history. The Bible is generally described as divided over two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the scripture of the Jews, and the New Testament is the scripture of the Christians although they subscribe to the Old Testament also.

Now let us turn to chapter XIII of *Satyarth Prakash*.

### **The Old Testament Creation of the World:**

*Swamiji* begins with a quotation from the Book of Genesis which is the opening book of the Bible. Genesis means origin, birth, mode of generation (of the world). The word is derived from the Greek root 'gen' which means 'to come into being, just as the *Sanskrit* root '*Jan*' means 'to create, to generate'. Genesis contains an account of the creation of the world. *Swamiji* quotes the following words from the very beginning of the Bible:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (I, 1-2.)

*Swamiji* comments on this part of creation that the Bible is a book of limited and vague knowledge, hence it cannot be a book of divine revelation. It is not clear what is meant by the *beginning*. Does it mean the beginning of this world? Was there another world before this, and before and before? What does *heaven* mean? Does it mean the sky or space, or some ideal world of bliss? Why was the earth

without form? Who gave it form and when? What is meant by the *deep*? What is meant by the Spirit of God? Was the spirit different from God or was it God itself? Did the waters exist before creation? Otherwise how could the spirit of God move upon the face of the waters?

*Swamiji* quotes further:

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness (I,3,4)

And further:

And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters. ... and God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (I, 6, 7, 8)

*Swamiji* comments that the Bible is not clear on the question of heaven: Earlier it was said that God created the earth and the heaven while here the firmament is called the heaven. Moreover, light is something inanimate, how could it hear the voice of God? And if it did hear, was it something other than God existing even before it was created?

According to *Swamiji*, then, the Bible gives a very simple and hear-say account of creation in six days. If the account of creation and revelation as given in *Satyarth Prakash* chapters VII and VIII is compared with this, this sounds as the account given by a primitive people who had lost the *Vaidic* heritage. And the *Satyarth Prakash* indicates only in summary form what is given in the *Vedas*, *Darshan* philosophy, *Upanishads* and the *Brahmanas*. However, if we try to understand the process in terms of the *Vaidic* idiom, we can say that "Let there be light" is the expression of a *sankalpa* in the Divine awareness, and at that level of that awareness and power, the *sankalpa* means that the intention is the same thing as doing. But this would not be the Christian interpretation.

### **Creation of Man:**

After creation of the world *Swamiji* takes up the creation of man:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them. (I, 26, 27, 28)

Having created man in the male and the female form, God *again* created woman, this time out of the body of the man he had created:

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof: And from the rib, which the Lord had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto man. (II, 21, 22)

*Swamiji* notes the inconsistencies in this account. God created man from the dust of the earth. Why couldn't He create woman from the same dust? And God had taken one rib out of the man's body, why is not man short of one rib now? This account is against the laws of nature. And if man was created in the image of God, does it mean that God also is of the nature of dust? Or is it that God too is as imperfect as the human being? Or, why is not the human being as perfect as God himself? These are questions which the Bible leaves unanswered.

**Evil:**

One important question about the creation of the world is the presence of evil. The Bible says that evil is *Satan*, the same as the chief angel Lucifer. When God had created the angels, He also created the Son, that is, His own son who later took incarnation as Jesus Christ. God asked the angels to do homage to the Son. Lucifer refused, saying that the Son too was a creature just like him (Lucifer). This refusal was an act of disobedience, and for this act of disobedience Lucifer was thrown out of Heaven into Hell. He was followed by many other angels who accepted him as their leader. Since his fall from Heaven, Lucifer acts as *Satan*, the evil which misleads the children of Adam to follow the evil path against the will of God. It was *Satan* who persuaded the first woman, Eve, to follow the path of evil, that is, disobedience to God. It seems then that evil sprang into the world much against the intentions of God. And this could not be, because God is omniscient. So, if evil came in as it did, either God was not omniscient or the Bible has no proper answer to the problem and presence of evil. Both evil and suffering can be understood and explained only through the law of *Karma*.

Adam and Eve were created and placed in the garden of Eden which was paradise. Paradise was heaven on earth, where there was everything to eat and drink, everything that the two could wish for and dream of. But there was one tree, the Tree of Knowledge. Having created and placed Adam and Eve in Paradise, God commanded them not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. He warned that if they did, they would be subject to sin and death. For some time both were obedient.

But then came *Satan* in the form of Serpent. He said to the woman: "If you eat the fruit, you will not die. You know why God has forbidden you to eat the fruit of the tree? God knows that the day you eat thereof your eyes will be opened and you will be as gods, knowing good and evil". And the woman saw the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eye and desirable to make herself wise with knowledge. She plucked the fruit and ate. She gave it to Adam and he also ate. Their eyes were opened. They saw they were naked and they covered their bodies with leaves. God then cursed the Serpent (*Satan*): "Man will ever crush your head and you will ever bite his heel". He cursed woman: "Your husband will rule over you and you will bear children with pain and in sorrow." And God said to Man: "Because you listened to the voice of your wife, cursed is the bond for you. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. The earth shall bring forth to you only thorns and thistles."

**God:**

*Swamiji* says that the God of the Bible was not omniscient. He created *Satan* without knowing that he would be evil. So actually God is responsible for all the evil *Satan* does. Since the Christians do not believe in previous birth and *Karma*, why did God create *Satan* as an evil character? Why did He forbid Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge? Knowledge is not evil. And God cursed not only Adam and Eve, he cursed all his descendants too for all time. Why? All this shows that God was as ignorant and as jealous as any human being could be.

The story goes farther than the curse: God had planted the Tree of Life also in the Garden. So He said: "Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever:" So He drove out the man (and woman); and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden angels as guard and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the Tree of Life.

*Swamiji's* comment is that this God of the Bible is not the omniscient, just and merciful God of the universe, because wherever there is mention of God in the Bible it is as if he was a man.

This God is anthropomorphic, as partial, jealous, cruel and revengeful as any man. Take for example his treatment of the children of Adam: Adam had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain brought to God as offering the fruits of the field. And Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. God accepted the offerings of Abel but he did not accept the offerings of Cain. Cain felt angry with God and his brother. He killed his brother with a stone. (IV, 3, 4, 5, 6)

*Swamiji* comments that this God was a flesh eater, hence he accepted the lamb and rejected the fruit. And he gave the cause to Cain to be angry and murderous. And God cursed Cain for all his life.

The Bible (VI, 1-7) relates the story of the sons of God and the daughters of men. The sons of God married the daughters of men and begot children. These children were mighty giants and the earth was full of them. And God saw that they were wicked and he repented he had created man on the earth. He grieved and said: "I will destroy man from the face of the earth, both man and beast and the creeping things and the fowls of the air." The Bible does not say who the sons of God were and how He maintained a family. *Swamiji* comments that the authors of the Bible had no idea of the true and universal God.

The same Book of the Bible tells how God destroyed the living creatures by a flood except Noah and his family and one pair of each living creature so that life could begin anew and continue. Noah built a huge boat for his family and the creatures and thus survived. God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. Every living thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat (IX, 1-3)". Noah too built an altar to God and made an offering of every clean beast and clean fowl and burnt these for God. And God smelled a sweet savour and said in his Heart: "I will never curse the earth any more, nor smite any living creature" (VIII, 20-22). *Swamiji* says that all such acts of God show that the Biblical God is a primitive tribal person, ignorant and capricious, fond of flesh and its flavour and lacks all kindness and mercy.

God walked with Enoch for three hundred years after the birth of Methuselah (V, 22). He talked to Abraham of the future progress of his descendants and after having talked to him He went up (XVII, 9-22). God again appeared to Abraham. There were three men with him. Abraham welcomed Him and entertained Him with a fine meal of cake and the meat of a tender and good calf (XVIII, 2-8). God promised to meet Moses too: He said: "You cannot see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me, and you shall stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put these in a clift of the rock, and will cover them with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and you shall see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen" (XXXIII, 200). With all these meetings and movements across the land and mountains and the sky, says *Swamiji*, the God of the Bible is not the Omnipresent Spirit of the universe but a person of flesh and blood who enjoyed a good meal of flesh and flavour and posed as God to the simple, primitive, tribal people.

### **Tribal Religion:**

A tribal religion grows from the tribal culture and develops through the history of the tribes. During this course of development, while it acknowledges and sanctifies the facts of tribal history, it accepts and extends the customs of the tribal tradition. Thus the Old Testament of the Bible sanctifies the history of the early migrations and settlement of the Jews, their social conditions and political status in Egypt, the exodus from Egypt, and the lives, sufferings and tribulations of their leaders who were also the early prophets. The result was that history became an expanded example of the ethics, morals and values of this religion. If we try to abstract the essential content of this historicized

religion -- which content should be of the nature of universality -- it would be little as compared to the bulk of the body of the scripture. Further, all the writings recorded in the Old Testament during a couple of centuries before Christ, and later added during the first few centuries of the Christian era, historically pertain to no more than the last four thousand years. Which means that all the ideas contained in the Old Testament refer to the state of culture and civilization after the *Mahabharata* which is now being understood and recognized as the first world war of international dimensions. The post-*Mahabharata* period from about 3000 BC to about 500 BC was the dark age toward the end of which Vam Marga, a perverted form of *Hinduism* had developed. That very Dark Age is the age of the Old Testament. Hence, perhaps, while the violence in matters of food and sacrifice to God is accepted, the Ten Commandments given to Moses co-exist with the customs. While the Sixth Commandment says *Thou shall not kill*, the tribal habit of killing and eating is still maintained. There are to-day large scale animal farms and awfully cruel slaughter houses in the Christian world. The latest Christians, however, are reconciling the custom and the Commandment: They have changed the translation from 'Thou shall not kill' to *you shall not murder* which is now God's word made to new order. So they can keep the commandment and also eat what they love.

In a historical religion customs and traditions persist in spite of the change desired, because history gives form to the idea and the value. So animal sacrifice remains prominent according to the Old Testament. Sacrifice is even the price of sin. For example: And the Lord called unto Moses - saying, "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the cattle.... And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests .... shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Even if a priest has sinned, he too shall bring a bullock. If a ruler has sinned, he shall bring a goat, a lamb or two pigeons and wring off their head from the neck .... and so on. (Leviticus, I, 1-2, 5-9; IV, 22-24; V, 7,8,10,11,13.

*Swamiji* says that this is the kind of God no one need fear because there is a price for sin to suit every pocket.

*Swamiji* quotes from the Bible stories of the lives of the prophets, Abraham, David, Isaac (son of Abraham by his wife Sarah), Ishmael (son of Abraham by Hagar, the maid), Moses, Joseph, Job, Enoch and others. There are stories of God's punishment and even revenge upon the Egyptians, Sodom, Gomorrah, etc. There are even stories of incest : The daughters of Lot made their father drink wine and lay with him, one each night, and both got children by the father (XIX, 32-36). Even God visited Sarah and Sarah conceived by His grace and got a child when her husband was close to ninety years of age. All these stories are tribal, now out of date and irrelevant, but they remain a part of the divine truth according to the Christians and they are said to be valid for all time. But *Swamiji* does not accept any historical facts as valid for all time, nor does he accept it as revelation although the fact might be from the history of any community whatsoever. For that very reason, he rejected the various *Hindu Puranas* saying that they were not the truth.

### **The New Testament:**

The New Testament is the final truth for the Christians. It comprises the four Gospels, the acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul and the Revelation or Apocalypse considered to be by John, the Psalms and the Proverbs, etc. It chiefly consists of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as reported by his disciples, and the lives and words of the saints. But the truth and value of the New Testament flows from the divinity of Christ -- his birth, acts and powers, and his death and resurrection.

### **The Birth of Christ:**

*Swamiji* quotes from the Gospel of Matthew to describe the myth of the birth of Christ. But to give the account fully let us first quote from the Gospel according to Luke (26-37):

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, Hail, favoured one! The Lord is with you..... And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offering shall be called the Son of God."

Now from the Gospel according to Matthew (18-25):

The birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for it is He who will save his people from their sins". And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son; and he called his name Jesus.

*Swamiji* comments that no intelligent person can accept this because it is against the law of nature and scientific observation of reality. If an unmarried girl conceives a child who will believe if it is said that the conception is by God or by His angel? The story was a sheer myth. To be true to his conviction *Swamiji* says that all such stories are myths. All these have to be understood and accepted in the language and law of nature, however inconvenient though it might be. *Swamiji* says that the society of the early days of Christianity must have been very primitive, only for that reason could they believe the stories. Even those saints who recorded this myth have said that they were saying so because they had heard it from others (Luke, 1-3). The Immaculate Conception is one of the rock-bed foundations of Christianity and the same is nothing more than a myth.

Another foundation of Christianity is the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ which means that, after he had died on the cross and had been laid in the grave, he came back to life and in body went up to Heaven and there sat down at the right hand of God. *Satyarth Prakash* does not take note of this. But it is given here to give the reader a better appreciation of *Swami* Dayananda's view of the myth of Christianity, because with this account and a rational understanding of it, *Swami* Dayananda's criticism of Christianity would be better appreciated.

### **The Crucifixion:**

Jesus Christ was a Jew. In his day Jewish religion (Judaism) and the Jewish law was a national religion in the sense that the Jews regarded themselves as God's chosen people and their religion as the testament of their relationship with God. Christianity, however, regards Jesus as the culmination and fulfilment of all that is foreshadowed and foretold in the Law of Moses and by the Hebrew prophets. Thus Christianity claims to be the full and final development of Judaism and accepts the

teachings of the Old Testament as completed and fulfilled by the New Testament. Jesus Christ and his life and teachings are regarded as examples of the Divine in human form, as Jesus said: I and my Father (God) are one.

Nothing new is easily acceptable to the people in a position of power. So the priests and the elderly officers complained against Jesus to Herod, the King, and Pilate, the Governor of Judea. They also bribed one of Christ's disciples, Judas Iscariot, and Judas told them where they could find him. They found him and produced him before the Governor. The charge was that he was spreading sedition and rebellion against the state and the priests.

Pilate examined Jesus. Even the ruler, Herod, examined him. They found him innocent. The account is given in all the four Gospels. Here is Luke (23, 13-16):

And Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against him. No, nor has Herod, for he sent him back to us, and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him. I will therefore punish him and release him.

That being the day previous to the Sabbath, he was obliged to release to them one prisoner. But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas", another man and a mischievous one. (23, 17-18). Pilate again said that he was not guilty. But they still cried: "No, crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate knew for sure that they were crying out of envy. Even while Pilate was sitting in the judgment seat, his wife sent him word that last night she dreamt that Jesus was a *Righteous* man and he should do nothing hard to him. But he saw that as the people shouted and demanded his death, a riot was starting. So he washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves," and he delivered him to them to be crucified. So they took him to a place called Golgotha and crucified him alongwith two others, one on his *Right* and the other on the left. (Matthew, 27, 18-38).

Before we move on with this sad story we must remember that the king, Herod, had not found Jesus guilty. The governor and judge, Pilate, too, found him innocent and indeed felt guilty of shedding innocent blood. But he was forced to deliver him to the envious crowd under pressure of the priests and the powerful elderly people.

Now let us ask ourselves: In such a bad situation of jungle law, would not such a judge cooperate by closing his eyes if Jesus could be saved from mob fury?

Next: That was Friday. Saturday is Sabbath day. The Jews prepared themselves for the Sabbath day on the previous day specially from the evening onward. So nothing cruel, no blood shedding toward or after the evening on Friday.

Also, there are two views about the death and resurrection of Jesus:

1. Jesus died on the cross, was taken down and laid in the tomb, and he rose in body and went to Heaven and sat on the right hand of God. This is the official view of Christianity.
2. Jesus did not die on the cross, he was taken down alive, was treated in the tomb, and lived for some time after.

There is a third view as well, that is the modern scientific view. It explains the death and resurrection of Jesus in a figurative way. Jesus remained alive as any great man remains alive through his message of inspiring truth. He was the 'Son of God' because his spirit was pure and close to the spirit of God. This view is held by many Christians and by non-Christians as well.

If we study the facts of Christ's betrayal, accusation, trial, sentence, crucifixion, and resurrection carefully and critically, we shall find enough material to doubt the first view, subscribe to the second, and understand the third. We shall also understand how a highly organized religion creates a mythology and has it accepted not only by virtue of people's hunger for faith but also by the power, prosperity and presentation of those who profess it.

Let us follow the events of the day:

1. When it was day, the council of elders of the people assembled... and they led him away to their council chamber.
2. Then they brought him before Pilate, accusing, arguing....
3. Pilate heard it and asked whether the man was a Galilean.....
4. He learned he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, and sent him to Herod.
5. Herod questioned him at some length ... sent him back to Pilate.
6. Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people.
7. The trial and the judgement to crucify Christ.
8. They took him to the praetorium, called up the Roman cohorts, they led him out, pressed a man named Simon of Cyrene to bear his cross. (A cohort is a body of 300 to 600 soldiers).
9. They crucified him at 9.00 AM (Mark, 15, 25); after 12.00 noon (John, 19, 14-18).

It is to be considered whether all the activities from 1 to 9 above would be completed from morning to 9.00 AM. Two Gospels are silent about the time. Only one says the crucifixion was done in the third hour of the day, that is, at 9.00 AM. Another says it was done after 12.00 noon. *And then*

10. From the 6th hour of the day to the 9th, that is, *from 12.00 noon to 3.00 PM*, darkness fell upon the earth (Mark, 15, 33). It was a terrible storm.
11. Jesus breathed his last at 3.00 P.M. (Mark, 15, 34).

Questions now arise: If they nailed Jesus on the cross through the chest, both his hands and his feet, could he keep alive from 9.00 in the morning to 3.00 in the evening? One thing is important: after he breathed his last and was brought down from the cross his blood was live. He was taken down from the cross by one Joseph of Arimathea with the permission of Pilate since Joseph was close to Pilate. Joseph was also a disciple of Jesus "but a secret one" (John, 19, 38). Joseph was also "a prominent member of the Council" (Mark, 15, 43), and "he had not consented to their plan and action" (Luke,

23, 51). "And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him (i.e., to Jesus) by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight". And they took the body of Jesus and laid it in a tomb close to the place of crucifixion. It was a private tomb belonging to Joseph and no one had been laid there and they closed it with a rock. It is to be noted that before Jesus's body was taken down from the cross the multitude had left the place and Jesus' disciples stood at a distance. It is also to be noted that everybody from Pilate to the Centurion who was commander of the force that stood guard at the site had felt convinced that Jesus was innocent. The Centurion too had left and reported to Pilate that Jesus had died. After that report only, Pilate had allowed Joseph to take the body. Because of that report also, the body of Jesus was not mutilated although the custom was to mutilate the body.

### **The Resurrection:**

Nothing is mentioned in the Gospels as to what happened from the laying of the body in Joseph's private tomb to the morning of the first day of the week. On that morning it was found by Mary Magdalene and other disciples of Jesus that the body was not there. Angels in white were seen, and frightening scenes of nature are reported. The disappearance of the body remains a mystery. It is reported, however, that he met his disciples, led them as far as Bethany, blessed them and parted from them. John's account in the Gospel says that Jesus met his disciples on the evening of the first day, then after eight days, and then again at the Sea of Tiberius, and asked them to carry on the mission. John closes the Gospel thus: And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

John gives an account of what happened (27, 63 to 28,15): The priests asked Pilate the next day to secure and seal the grave lest the disciples of Jesus come and steal him away and say to the people that he has risen from the dead. Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how. And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone." Then on the morning of the first day of the week "a severe earth-quake had occurred and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and *Sat* upon it. And his appearance was like lightning and his garment as white as snow, and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men." The angel said to Mary Magdalene and others that Jesus was arisen and gone.

The guards then informed the priests and the elders. The priests and the elders gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep'!..... and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day." This story of Christ taken away at night sounds true.

This lengthy account of the crucifixion and the resurrection, that is, Christ taken down alive, placed in Joseph's private tomb and being taken away sounds true according to the facts narrated in the Gospels and analysed above. When there is a storm or even an eclipse of the sun, the lack of light is taken as the evening even by the birds. It happened when there was a complete eclipse of the sun in India. The birds came back to rest in the nests. So may be that Jesus was put on the cross around that time and soon taken down in that obscure light. May be the soldiers got the bribe or they might have actually gone to sleep just as the guards had gone to sleep when the baby Krishna was taken out of Kansa's prison in Mathura and taken to Gokul.

We may also refer to a report of the 16th International Botanical Congress held in St. Louis (Washington), U.S.A. on August 2, 1999, published in *Toronto Star* on the pollen grain of flowers

found on the shroud of Jesus. The shroud has been displayed in a cathedral in Turin (Italy). It is the pollen grain of flowers which come together only in Jerusalem and blossom for one hour only around 3.00 to 4.00 o'clock in the day. The flowers must have been picked during that one hour. And that is the time the storm had come.

We may now refer to *The Crucifixion: an Eye Witness Account* first published in USA in 1873 and then on the first birth centenary of *Swami Dayananda* published by Gurukul Kangri, Haridwar (U.P.) India. That account was written by one of the disciples of Christ. It is really an eye-opening account because it says that Christ never died on the cross, he was taken down alive, put in the tomb and taken out during the night itself after herbal treatment. Once the myth of the Son of God and of the Resurrection is cleared of its mystique in the light of reason and fact, Christ would be acceptable as one of the super normal order of great teachers of his own time of history.

The Quran, in fact, goes a step further and says that Christ was not crucified (4, 158): "And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Mariam, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge about it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure." The Quran was complete by 632 A.D. So the fact of the death and the manner of it was known or known as reported to the prophet and the people around him. At least the Quranic account supports the point that the Crucifixion and death of Christ was in doubt and at the best was a conjecture.

It is surprising, says *Swami Dayananda*, that the Christian missionaries made fun of the miraculous and mystical lives of the Indian heroes and divine personalities, but loudly proclaimed the miracle of the Christian myth. They did so only to mislead the simple ignorant people of India. Chapter XIII of *Satyarth Prakash* is an explosive warning against the missionaries' activities.

*Now the miracles:* First the miraculous conception itself. Then other miracles: A leper came to him and bowed down saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him saying, "I am willing. Be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleaned. By simply a word, he healed the paralysis of the centurion's servant. So he went about healing people of various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics. (Matthew, 8, 2-3, 6-13; 4, 24). He silenced the storm on the sea, exorcised demons and ghosts from men and changed them into pigs which ran and drowned in the sea (Matthew, 8, 24-32). A multitude of people, lame, crippled, blind, and dumb and many others came to him. He healed them. They were hungry too, but his disciples had only seven loaves and a few small fish. He asked the multitude to sit down and eat. He broke the loaves and he and his disciples fed the multitude. They were all fed and seven baskets full were left over. Number of people fed? Four thousand besides women and children (Matthew, 15, 30-38). *Swamiji* says that on the one hand Christ had this miraculous power and, on the other hand, while he starved and the fig tree gave him no fruit, he cursed the tree and it dried up. Such contradictions there are in the Bible. But all these powers of Christ are used by the Christians to convert simple and ignorant people.

Jesus says, "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my father" (Matthew, 7, 21). And yet in Matthew, 28, 18, it has been said, "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.'" In the Revelations of John, the Bible gives a picture of Heaven with Christ as its ruler. Such cannot be the word of God.

**The Word:**

And now let us come to the word (John, 1, 1-4): In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. *Swamiji's* comment in brief is: The word could not have existed without the speaker. The word can never be God. The world could not have been created by the word, and not without the material cause.

We might suggest an interpretation of the Word. Research is going on in Europe and America to show that there is every probability that Christ was in India for years. There was an exchange of goods and ideas between India, the Middle East and even Greece and Rome. Is it possible that he came in contact with the sages of India and the *Upanishads*? He might have read, for example, the *Mandukya Upanishad* which begins as under:

AUM, this is the Word, eternal and imperishable. All that is its manifestation and personification in self-realized form. All past, all present, all future, all that too is Aum (The Word). Anything else that may be beyond the three divisions of time, that too is Aum only.

The *Sanskrit* word for Word is Akshara, that which perishes not. Hence Akshara stands both for Word and for God. And Aum is the name, the essential name, of God as *Swamiji* says in *Satyarth Prakash* Chapter I. Hence we have the term *Shabada Brahma, Brahma* that is Akshara, the imperishable Word. The *Yogasutras* say that the word for God is Aum. Commentators on the Bible such as Professor Northrop Frye and Fritjof Capra point to such interpretations and take the interpretation of the Bible far from the literal truth of it. It is for us to work out the details of the exchange of ideas between the *Vaidic* scholars and the saints of the Semitic tradition and the West. If we do so, probably we shall jointly come to a universal *dharma* beyond the historical statements of it such as the Bible and other scriptures.

# CHAPTER 14

## Islam

*Swami* Dayananda studies the Quran sympathetically, carefully and critically: He says so about all scriptural literature in general in the Introduction to *Satyarth Prakash* and in the sub-introduction to Ch. 14. He says: For universal knowledge and human progress, all scriptures should be open to free study and we should hold interfaith dialogue so that we accept the truth and reject the untruth. For example, faith in One God, love, charity, service, non-injury, these are good things in Islam and acceptable. But there are many other things which qualify these good things and distort the basic truth. These *Swamiji* studies openly and courageously while he leaves the conclusion to the reader's judgement.

*Swamiji* depended on the Quran in translation for his study and comments. He says: "Our study and discussion of Islam is based only on the Quran, not on any other book, because the Muslims' faith in the Quran is absolute... The Quran which is written in the Arabic tongue has been translated into Urdu by distinguished Muslim scholars of Arabic. That translation was rendered into Hindi in *Devanagari* script and got corrected by eminent scholars of Arabic. If anyone questions the accuracy of the translation used, he should first prove that the translation done by Muslim scholars is inaccurate before challenging us." *Swamiji* thus leaves his study open to discussion and criticism.

Before we study *Swamiji's* observations on Islam, let us acquaint ourselves with the basic tenets of Islam.

Islam means 'acceptance', and 'complete surrender to God'. A Muslim is a person who has totally surrendered his or her life and work to God.

Islam is considered to be an outgrowth of Judaism and Christianity. It insists on an uncompromising monotheism and acknowledges the absolute sovereignty of God and the infallible authority of Prophet Mohammad. A Muslim's voice of the heart and soul is expressed in the declaration: "There is no God but (Allah) and Mohammad is His Messenger."

The sacred book of Islam is the Quran. The Quran is said to be a record of the revelations which the prophet received from God through the chief angel Gabriel. Whenever the prophet received a revelation, he uttered it and it was written down and memorized by his followers. Then all the revelations were collected and compiled by his followers a few years after his death (in 632 AD). An authorized version was produced in early 650's by a group of Arabic scholars under Caliph Uthman. It is regarded as the final revelation of Divine Truth. Its truth is not to be questioned, not to be proved, but it has to be accepted as the absolute standard of merit and truth itself. Chapter II of the book opens as this: "This is the book which cannot be doubted, it is a guide to the God-fearing." If anyone denies the truth of the Quran, it means that God Himself has sealed his/her heart against the truth.

There are six articles of faith in Islam:

1. Allah: Allah is the one, the only one absolute God, the sole lord creator, preserver, dispenser and agent of all that is and happens. And Mohammad is His Messenger.

2. Angels: Around Allah's throne in Heaven are angels, Gabriel being the chief. They were created by Allah before He created the world. They support Allah's throne, sing in praise of Him and act as His messengers.
3. The Scripture: God revealed to earlier prophets the truth, but the Quran revealed to Prophet Mohammad in Arabic is the final and infallible revelation.
4. The Prophets: There were prophets earlier such as Moses and Jesus, but Mohammad is the last and the final, the seal of the prophets.
5. The Day of Judgement: All creatures will be raised from the dead on the last day for judgment, their deeds will be weighed and justice will be done with reward or punishment.
6. Pre-destination: God has decreed everything that happens. He knows all that was and is and shall be. Therefore, submit to His will and do whatever is your duty.

There are five duties:

1. Recite the creed with perfect conviction: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is His messenger." This is the final declaration of faith for a Muslim.
2. Worship: Observe Namaz as prescribed five times a day.
3. Charity: Charity is either compulsory (Zakat), or voluntary (Sadaqat). After charity only, a Muslim's property is pure and legitimate, not otherwise.
4. Fasting: Keep fast (Roza) from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan, the holy month when the prophet received the Revelation.
5. Pilgrimage: At least once in life time, a Muslim should go on pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca and perform religious rites at Kaaba, the main shrine.
6. Some Islamic sects, specially the Kharijites, believe that holy war (Jihad) is the sixth religious duty in order to defend or reclaim or extend an Islamic area.

*Swamiji* takes up the very opening of the Quran:

**"In the name of God, the kind and the merciful".**

He says: The Muslims claim that the Quran is the Word of God, but it appears from the opening passage that the author of this book was some person other than God. Had the author been God himself, He would not have said, "I begin in the name of God." He would have said, "For the benefit of humanity". Also, this God is not merciful. Had He been merciful, He would not have sanctioned and prescribed killing for sacrifice. Are not all creatures the creatures of God? Why kill God's creatures in the name of God?

*Swamiji* quotes from the Quran chapter 16, 63:

"By Allah, most certainly we sent (apostles) to nations before you." New line *Swamiji* comments: If God is the author of the book, why should He swear by God? And swearing is not a good thing, because it is a person of doubtful character and credibility who feels the need to swear.

Further, *Swamiji* quotes from 36, 2-3:

"I swear by the Quran full of wisdom; Most surely you are one of the apostles."

*Swamiji's* comment:

If Quran were the word of God, why would He swear by the Quran itself? Further, we can see that the Quran is concerned not only with the truth that it reveals but also with the authority of the prophet who proclaimed it. If we relate the se quotations with the opening of the Quran, we cannot miss the point that this work is not the word of God but a record made by people during the time of Caliph Uthman who got the Quranic texts collected and recorded after the death of the prophet.

*Swamiji* takes note of the successive revelations made by Allah, according to the Quran. The first revelation was made to Adam: "And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels, saying, 'Tell me the names of these, if you are right.' The angels did not know. But Adam repeated the names as he had been taught" (2, 31-33). The Quran continues: "Recall that we gave Moses the scripture (Torah) and the Statute book, that you may be guided" (2, 53). "Subsequent to them (i.e., Moses and the other prophets), we sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the previously revealed Torah. We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and enlightenment for the righteous" (5, 46). "Then we revealed to you (i.e., Mohammad) this scripture, truthfully, confirming all previous scriptures, and superseding them" (5, 48). Thus Allah changes one revelation for another (16,101), because He knows best what He reveals. Mohammad is the last of the prophets, the final seal of prophecy. Quran is the final scripture.

*Swamiji* comments that if a revelation is from the Omniscient God, it is complete and final. If Allah continued to send prophets and, through them, revelations, then it means that He was either not omniscient or He forgot to reveal certain things. And if the books revealed to Moses and Jesus were books of divine knowledge then the subsequent books were superfluous.

In the case of the Quran also, the revelation is said to have been instant as well as continual over a period of twenty - three years. Verse 17,106 says: "This is a Quran that we decreed to be released to the people by you (i.e., the prophet), over a long period," and also "we sent it down all at once." This one occasion was one grand blessed night in the month of Ramadan (2,185; 53, 1-18; 44, 3; 97, 1). Why years and years to release a message which was received all at once? The truth seems to be that the prophet got the light and inspiration that God is one and only one absolute power, and then he continued meditating on this one truth for years. But this explanation, though reasonable, would not be acceptable to the Muslims because, if they accept it, the faith that the Quran is the word of God, every word of it true and final, would suffer.

Further, Divine Revelation is evolutionary (16, 101): if we accept this position just for the sake of argument, then no revelation at any stage can be final. The reason is that if successive revelations were necessary because new needs in history arose according to the circumstances, then history, growth or even corruption does not come to an end at any point of time. In such changing situations there cannot be a final scripture. Just as the New Testament superseded the Old Testament, and the Quran superseded all the foregoing scriptures of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, so why can't there be a time when the Quran too can be superseded? Already certain questions are being raised by

Muslims in the case of Hadith and Sunnah (though not in the case of the Quran). Reference may be made to *Quran: The Final Testament* translated Rashad Khalifa, Imam Mosque of Tucson, Tucson, Arizona (U.S.A. 85719), (1989 edition), Appendix 15 (page 506). In *Swami Dayananda's* language, if we interpret the Quranic lore in a very sympathetic and understanding manner, we can call it a *Smriti* book produced in difficult and fighting circumstances when Arabia was suffering from idol worship, religious differences, violence, and social, political and moral corruption. The prophet came and rose as a reformer, suffered pain and frustration in his early career, but then mustered power and won not only as a reformer but also as a political leader. He created a *Smriti*, the Quran, a "reminder" of faith (16, 43-5).

A book of reform is created in particular circumstances and the forms and values it preaches are relevant to the time. Of course, it does have permanent values also. *Swami Dayananda* accepts such values of the Quran just as he accepts the permanent values of other faiths. For example, the worship of the one sole formless God (Allah) is and should be acceptable to all. But why should the power, presence, worship and authority of the one God be tied down to the authority of the prophet? For example: "And it behoves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and his Apostle have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and his Apostle, has gone astray " (33,36). How can divine authority be personalized? And shared too as it is said to be shared, here?

If a book of revelation is a book for all time and nations, it should be in a universal language. The language of the *Vedas*, for example, is such a language. It is the first and original language of all mankind, therefore, the *Vedas* are articulations of divine awareness in meta-language for all mankind for all time. Even otherwise, as the Western scholars say, if they are taken as the expressions of inspired minds, they are so remote or early in historical time that their age cannot be determined for sure. Easily it would be an age when the great migrations of the people over the globe had not taken place. In any case, if people do not understand the *Vaidic* language it is because such people have lost contact with that original heritage of theirs. But the Quran is written in the Arabic language which is not the universal language. This shows that it was a book meant only for the Arabs who understood that language. The Quran itself says: "And we did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly" (14, 4). "And thus have we revealed it, a true judgment in Arabic" (13, 37). Further it says: "Surely we have revealed it - an Arabic Quran - that you may understand" (12, 2). The reason is given further: "And if we had made it a Quran in a foreign tongue, they (i.e., the Arabs) would certainly have said: " Why have not its communications been made clear? What! a foreign (tongue) and in Arabia!" (41, 44). It is clear that the book was meant for the Arabs of the time. If so, how can it be called a world message?

There are indications available from the Quran itself that the mother knowledge of the Quran is the Universal knowledge existent in the Universal Mind:

Indeed! it is a glorious Quran,  
In a well guarded tablet. (85, 21-22)

Again:

Most surely it is an honoured Quran,  
In a hidden book. (56, 77-78)

Let us refer to 36, 12 in continuation of 85,21-22 and 56,77-78: 36,12 says:

Everything we have enumerated in a clear

Master Register. (translation by Majid Fakhry, Garnet)

The note on the verse says that "The reference is to Umm al-Kitab or al-lawh al-Mahfuz, the original and eternal codex of the Quran in heaven." What is that mother book from which the Quran and other scriptures have been taken? Where is that Master Register recorded? These are matters for a serious interfaith dialogue between the Islamic and the *Vaidic* scholars the way *Swami* Dayananda held interfaith dialogues.

Reference may also be made to 22, 70: "Do you not know that Allah knows the heavens and the earth? All that is already in a Book, and that is easy for Allah." Also verse 57.22 says: "Anything that happens on earth, or to you, is already recorded in a record before the creation." Obviously, that record is in the mind of God, the eternal scripture from where all the scriptures follow. That record in *Vaidic* language is *Para Vidya*. Verse 43, 4 says: "The Quran is in the original of the Book with us (Allah)".

The question is: What is that original hidden book and where is it? The answer is available if one sincerely wants to search for it: The hidden Book is the Universal Mind in which the Riks, the Samans and the Yajus exit, integrated with it as the spokes of a wheel are linked to the nave of the wheel (*YajurVeda* 34, 5). A reference to the *Vedas* is found in ancient Arabic poems written much earlier than the time of the prophet and still preserved in the libraries of Cairo, Constantinople and Jerusalem. A reference to these poems is available also in Pundit Dharma Deva Vidyamartand's book *Vedon ka Yathartha Swarupa* published by Gurukul Kangri, Haridwar (U.P.), India. A free translation of the relevant verses is given below:

"Blessed are you, land of India, where Allah revealed the Heavenly knowledge in four Books. These four books are the light of the world He revealed to four Rasuls of His. The Lord enjoins the people of the world to follow the *Vedas* which, says the Lord, have been revealed by Him. These four lights and treasures of knowledge are *Sama Yajur, Rik and Atharva*."

Interested in global humanity and knowledge as we are, including the enlightened Muslims, we should research the India - Arab pre-Islamic exchange of ideas, culture and literature in order to understand Islam also.

The Quran itself gives a hint of the infinity of its mother source: "If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord were exhausted, though we were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto" (18, 109). And again: "And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end; surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise (31, 27). This idea of infinity contained herein is an echo of the *Upanishadic* idea of the infinity of *Brahma* and Divine knowledge expressed through the repeated expression *Neti, Neti* (not just this much, more and still more, inexhaustible). We have yet to find out and understand the meaning and secret of the sacred stone (sang-e-aswad) fixed in the north-east corner of the holy shrine of Mecca. The prophet did not allow it to be broken. Why??

A book of universal knowledge cannot be a book of history. It cannot tell the stories of particular persons and dynasties how-so-ever great those persons and dynasties might have been. Such books can be what we call *Itihas - Purana* but not scriptures. *Swami* Dayananda takes note of the historical content of the Quran. He notes the stories of Joseph, Moses, Zulquarnain, Gog and Magog and others. If we go over the table of Quranic contents, we find the family of Imran, Yunus, Yusuf,

Ibrahim, Mary, Luqman, Sheba, Muhammad, Nuh, Quraish. Go over any list of Arabic and English equivalents of names, or the names given in the Index of contents of any edition of the Quran and you will find a great lot of historical names and events. Even the opponents of the prophet are given an important mention. For example, take chapter no.111: All-Masad which is translated as The Flame/ Thorns/ The Fibre in different translations. The chapter is quoted below:

Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and he will perish too.  
His wealth and what he earns will not avail him.  
He shall burn in fire that flames,  
And his wife will be a carrier of fire-wood,  
She shall have around her neck a twisted rope of thorns.

The footnote in Majid Fakhry's translation (Garnet Publishing, 1998) says that Abu Lahab was "Uncle of the prophet and an inveterate enemy of Islam in the early days" (p.432). This chapter thus is a record of the feud and the hate and anger arising out of that feud against him and his family.

Love and hate, good and evil, fighting and cooperation are facts of existence as we live our life. And if a book of knowledge claims to be a book of divine knowledge, then it has to be a book of universal knowledge. It cannot be a record of personal or particular facts of history because if it adopts the style of particular statement, it cannot do justice to universal knowledge. Nor can it deal in characters or classes who are made representatives of goodness or evil and who are then made objects of love or hate both at the level of the divine and the human. The scripture can mention and describe only tendencies which can be good or evil in general contexts, not particularly described. The *Veda*, for example, says: "O God, creator of all, give us what is good and protect us from all that is evil." It does not say: A, B or C is the evil person or the evil class. According to this view of scripture good as well as evil can exist anywhere at any time in any community as general and universal characteristics of human life.

Even the prophet himself was not free from the mixed character of a human being. He fell in love with the young wife of his adopted son Zaid. For some time he did not declare his love for fear of his reputation and other's opinion. But ultimately he did declare his love and intention. Zaid divorced his wife and the prophet married her. The Quran has three verses on this matter (Chapter 33, verses, 36 to 38). Verse 36 prepares the ground, 37 describes the event, and 38 sums up the belief of the pious. The verses are quoted below:

36. And it behoves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and his Apostle have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle, he surely strays off from the *Right* path.
37. And when you (i.e., the Prophet) said to him (i.e., to Zaid) to whom Allah had shown favour and to whom you had shown a favour (by adopting him?): keep your wife to yourself and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring to light (i.e., He wanted you to declare), and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him,. But when Zaid had accomplished his wants of her (i.e., satisfied his love and desire), we gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of (marrying) the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their wants of them; and Allah's command shall be performed.

38. There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allah has ordained for him; such has been the course of Allah with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allah is a decree that is made absolute.

Can we say here is a God who converts a personal desire of his prophet to an absolute decree and a universal law? There is a footnote on p.288 of Rashad Khalifa's translation:

33: 36-37. These verses teach us that *Muhammad the man* is not different from any other man; he makes mistakes (see 4:79, 9 : 117, 17:73-74, 33:37, 40:66, 61:1, 80:1-10, and 94:7), while *Muhammad the messenger* is utterly the perfection of Quran (53:3). Those who idolize the prophet claim that he never made mistakes. Thus they flagrantly deny the truthfulness of God almighty and flatly refuse to believe the Quran. In verses 36 and 37, we see Muhammad the man disobey Muhammad the messenger.

The fact is that this account of human weakness elevates the source desire of that weakness to a law and command of God.

Further, on the total humanity's level: the whole mankind is divided into two classes: the believers and the non - believers. The believers are those who believe in Allah and the prophet and obey both Allah and the prophet without having "any choice in their matter when Allah and his apostle have decided a matter." Clearly, here is a God who favours His prophet and grants his wish and desire for the wife of his adopted son even against public opinion and discounts a not-immoral public opinion against that personal desire. The expression of personal desire is *sincerity* called perfection of the Quran in the footnote above quoted, while the fear caused by public conscience is insincerity and immorality. Even an adopted son has no *Right* of choice and love over his wife against the desire of the prophet for her. *Swamiji's* comment on this affair is: "Those afflicted with the passion of sex neither feel fear, nor fear embarrassment". Indeed, one translation says: "The prophet should not feel embarrassed by what God decrees for him." And God decreed what the prophet had originally felt as embarrassing in the public situation.

Humanity is thus divided into two communities: The believers (who believe in Allah, His prophet and His final word, the Quran, without choice in their matters), and the non-believers. The believers are of the household of Allah, while the non-believers are of the party of satan. For the believers, there is Paradise where streams of milk, honey and pure drink flow, and where seductive beauties serve the pious. For the non-believers, there is the fire of hell and the noose around their neck (See 2, 85; 9, 89; 38; 50ff; 56, 7ff). The Quran paints a physical picture of Paradise where the believers shall be rewarded with perpetual pleasure, and of hell fire where the non-believers and the opponents of Allah and the prophet shall be punished with perpetual pain.

*Swamiji* comments on the Quranic idea of Paradise saying that if there are gardens and orchards in paradise they neither have existed from eternity nor can they last for ever, because the things which are made of material elements do not exist before the elements combine nor do they last after the dissolution. It seems that the idea of paradise was one way of persuasion and temptation for the people to join Islam in a country which lacked all these things.

The Quran, however, says that this description of paradise is allegorical. It is a likeness, it says:

A Likeness of the garden which the *Righteous* are promised; there flow beneath it rivers, its food and shades are perpetual; this is the reward of those who guarded (against evil), and the reward of the unbelievers is fire (13, 35).

Again:

A parable of the garden which those guarding (against evil) are promised: There are rivers of water ..... and rivers of milk ..... and rivers of drink delicious .... and rivers of honey.....(Are these) like (the lot of) those who abide in the fire..... and drink boiling water..... (47, 15).

Verse 3, 7 of the Quran itself is a comment on Paradise: "He it is Who has revealed the book to you; some of its verses are decisive (i.e., straight and clear), they are the basis of the book, and others are allegorical; then as for those in whose heart is perversity, they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allah." The point clearly emerges that either Allah has revealed something unclear and confusing which no one can understand, or the interpreters are misleading the simple folk. No God's word can deceive, it is clear.

Even if we leave the question of Paradise for the believers and hell for the un-believers to the judgement of Allah and the time after death, the question still irks. The believers are required to be agents of God in this life on this very earth. The Quran says that the prophet is the last prophet, the Quran is the final scripture, Islam is the best religion and Muslims are the best nation. To spread the message of Islam is the sacred duty of the Muslims. How should they spread this message?

It seems that, to begin with, the prophet adopted the method of persuasion and coexistence. Chapter 109 deals with the unbelievers in a spirit of tolerance:

Say, O you disbelievers.  
I do not worship what you worship.  
Nor do you worship what I worship.  
Nor will I ever worship what you worship.  
Nor will you ever worship what I worship.  
To you is your religion, and to me is my religion.

This is perfect tolerance and co-existence.

The Arabs in the prophet's time worshipped idols. Verses 53, 19-20 speak of three goddesses, Allat, Manat and Al-Uzza. Allat was the feminine name of Allah, and the idols were the daughters of God. Even the prophet himself worshipped idols. Verse 6, 56 suggests that: "Say, I have been stopped from worshipping the idols you had set up besides God. Say: I will not follow your ideas." Then there was conflict between the idol worshippers and the prophet. The idol worshippers even pressured him and he wavered. Verse 17, 73 suggests that: "They almost diverted you (Mohammad) from our revelations to you, and pressured you to invent something else. In that case they would have considered you a friend." The prophet even tried to achieve a reasonable compromise. Verse 3, 64 says: "Say, O people of the scripture, let us come to a reasonable agreement between us and you: That we shall not worship except God, and shall never set up any idols..." But the conflict continued. Mohammad had to leave Mecca for Medina. He continued the struggle, rallied his forces and won the upper hand. Then the style of the scripture changed and became aggressive:

And fight for the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not be aggressive. Surely Allah does not like the aggressors.

Kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from wherever they drove you (i.e., from Mecca). Idolatry is worse than carnage....

Fight them until idolatry is no more, there is no persecution and Allah's religion reigns supreme. (2, 190-193)

Thus fighting for the cause of Islam is prescribed except, normally, in the sacred month of Ramadan. Verse 9, 5 says: "So When the sacred months have passed away, slay the idolators wherever you find them and take them captive and besiege them and lie in ambush for them, then if they repent and take to prayer and pay the alms tax, let them their way. " Fighting became a cult with the Muslims and it continues to be so with the fanatic faithfuls. Violence against those who differ in religion is not acceptable to any reasonable modern community. It should be unacceptable, in fact, anywhere anytime in any religion including Islam.

If we read chapters 8-9 of the Quran carefully, we find that during the conflict, first there was agreement for coexistence, then breach of agreement, wounding of the hearts, healing of the hearts by fighting, defeating the enemy and dispossessing the idolators of their mosques. It seems that 'mosque' was the Arabic word for a temple, and in the temples including the supreme shrine in Mecca there were idols. May be that the holy Sang-e-Aswad today is a relic of the past and the prophet's unconscious link with what even he had worshipped earlier. Both these chapters are a record of the religious and political turmoil and conflict of a people trying to consolidate. There was an agreement between the idolators and the prophet's followers at the sacred Mosque, breach of the agreement, search for healing the hearts of a believing people (9, 7-14), the declaration that "The idolators are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the sacred mosque after this year" (9, 28), and the exhortation : "Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day (of Judgment), nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgement of superiority and they are in a state of subjection" (9, 29). The two chapters are titled "The Spoils of War", and "Repentance", spoils for the victor followers of the prophet and repentance for the defeated. No friendship with Jews or Christians (5, 51), no friendship with unbelievers (4, 144), except "with your brethren in faith" (9, 11).

No truth born of a historical situation can be wholly universal because it is formulated and structured by a mind in turmoil. The Quran is said to be the direct word of God, but even God is said to be on the side of the prophet and his followers: He fights for their cause, they fight for His.

*Swamiji* said there is no history in the *Vedas*. He said so because historical truth is not permanent. We can see even today: Science uses language which is free of the particularities of history. Scientific language is pure and symbolic, so is *Vaidic* language. A *Vaidic* idea is applicable to all situations of a similar class. But the Quranic ideas are historical, written in a historical language, born of the conflict of the Arab people divided between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. That situation doesn't last for ever. Light comes only through transparency, and conflict shadows the light. Hence there are conflicting statements in the Quran such as the value of reason and coexistence between the Muslims and the non-believers in chapter Al-Kafirun (109), and the battle to end the unbelievers observed by *Swami* Dayananda in his observations nos. 20,23,25, 31,35, 52, 54, 58, 61, 76, 79, 81, 85, 86, 102, 108, 140, 144.

You can note even such clear contradictions as in the following:

- i) To Allah belong the East and the West. So which-ever way you turn (while praying), there is Allah's face. Indeed Allah is Omnipresent and Omniscient. (2, 115)
- ii) The East and the West belong to Allah only; He guides whom he likes to the right path. (2,142)

Now compare this position with the following:

- i) And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and surely it is the very truth from your lord. (2, 149)
- ii) And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face toward the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your face towards it, so that people shall have no accusation against you, except such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear me, That I may complete My favour on you and that you may walk on the *Right* course. (2,150)

In the above quotations, the conflict between the Muslims and the Christians and Jews is clearly expressed. The Jews and the Christians faced toward the East, in the direction of Al Aqsa, the sacred mosque in Jerusalem. But for the Muslims Al-Ahram, the sacred mosque in Mecca, was important. So, although the Quran says that all directions belong to Allah, yet it prescribes that the Muslims face toward Mecca. And that is the commandment of Allah. Those who do not face toward Mecca and do not accept Allah, the Prophet, the Book (Quran) and the Mosque (Mecca) are not of the family of Allah.

Then where do they belong? They do not belong to the party on the *right* path, the path of those on whom Allah has bestowed His favours. On the contrary they belong to the path of those who go astray, on whom Allah's wrath is brought down (1, 6-7). They are of the party of satan.

Satan is created by God and yet disowned and condemned. So are condemned all those who would not follow the prophet. And this decree is passed even before the children of Adam are born:

God created Adam, then shaped him, and then said to the angels, "Bow to him." The angels bowed to Adam but Iblis (Satan) did not. He did not join the angels. Then God said, "Why didn't you bow to Adam when I ordered you?" Satan replied, "I am better than he. You created me from fire, you created him from clay." God then commanded *Satan* to get out from Heaven because he was proud and disobedient, and in Heaven he couldn't be proud. "You are debased and condemned", said God to Satan. And Satan appealed "Give me leave till the day of Judgement". God granted his request. And Satan then challenged, "Since you have willed that I go astray (i.e., since you misled me), I will lie in the straight path of men and lead them astray. They will not be thankful to you." And God declared : "Out you go from here, despised, debased and fallen. Those who follow you will join you in hell" (7, 11-18).

*Satan* and the unbelievers, who are of his party, are consigned to hell: The unbelievers who are not yet born, who refuse to believe a book which has not yet been revealed, to a prophet who too is not yet born. *Swami* Dayananda takes note of it in his observation no.69:

In fact Allah himself takes part in human affairs. First He creates an unbeliever, Satan (2, 34). Then he uses him to mislead those who are unbelievers: "Do you not see that we have

sent the shaitans against the unbelievers, inciting them by incitement" (19, 84)? He misleads whomever He wills and guides towards him those who submit" (13, 27). And the disbelievers will never believe for there is a reason: "As for those who disbelieve, it will be the same for them; whether you warn them or not, they cannot believe. (That is because) God seals their hearts, and their hearing, and places veils upon their eyes "(2, 6-7). The unbelievers are thus doubly cursed and condemned: They cannot be saved because they don't believe, and they don't believe because God does not allow them to believe.

In short, the God of earth and heaven becomes a personal God of the Muslims. Others are ruled out of the Kingdom. Thus the world is divided between two households: one of God and the other of Satan. God has power over earth and heaven and hell, and *Satan* has an autonomous rule over part of the earth. The believers are destined to join paradise, and the unbelievers are destined to burn in hell and drink boiling water (2.25; 56, 42-44).

This brings us to human *Karma* and predetermination. Rashad Khalifa, writes in *Quran: The Final Scripture* (Islamic Productions, (P. 503): "We are absolutely free to choose belief; this is God's decree throughout Quran... Even before creation, the human being was given a choice either to submit to God or to acquire the freedom of choice (33, 72)". The choice is *between* submitting to God *and* freedom of choice. There is no freedom of choice within God's dispensation. The translator refers us to 33, 72 which reads: "We had offered the responsibility to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to accept it and were afraid thereof. But the human being accepted it; surely, he was wrong, ignorant." Then the translator writes a note: "In view of the general human plague of idol worship, and the fact that the vast majority of people are condemned to hell (see 12, 103 and 106), the chance that any particular individual will make it to heaven is practically nil. (See also 32, 13 and 36, 7). The only choice is: Submit to Allah, the prophet and the Quran. The Quran reminds every believer: "(Remember) the day when we will call every people with their Imam; then whoever is given his book in his *Right* hand, these shall read their books; and they shall not be dealt with a whit unjustly" (17, 71).

*Swamiji* comments: "Why the Imam? Is God not omniscient? Why does God wait for doing justice from the day of a person's death to the day of doom (i.e., end of the world)? Do the souls have to remain in custody till then? If you want to know about justice, read the *Veda* and *Manusmriti*". (Observation 103)

There are points in the Quran itself on which we should have an interfaith dialogue with the followers of the prophet. Let us refer to 7, 172: "Recall that your Lord gathered all the descendants of Adam (before creation), and had them bear witness on themselves, saying, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes indeed, we bear witness'. Therefore, you cannot say on the day of resurrection, 'We never knew about this!'" The question now is: Did the children of Adam exist before this creation? The verse suggests they did, even before Adam was created.

Also, let us refer to 2. 28: "How can you (i.e., the people of Mecca) disbelieve in Allah? You were dead (i.e., being a life-germ not living yet) and He brought you back to life (i.e., as a child); then He will cause you to die and then bring you back to life again; then unto Him you will return."

The verses above indicate that there was a creation earlier than this, and the children of Adam were the souls which existed and were given life in the forms as they exist in the world. Further, the soul gets life as a baby, grows and dies and is born again and again until the last day of the creation arrives when the souls are given the final judgment according to which they get their life form in the next creation. It seems that in their over-enthusiasm against idol-worship, the Muslims have missed the

significance of such verses. Also, since they believe that the idol-worshippers are already condemned to hell, they have avoided an interfaith dialogue with the followers of the *Vedas*, taking them, too, generally as idol-worshippers and polytheists. If there was no previous creation and the souls had no record of their actions, how could God create various forms of life in a just manner? Also, why did He create one person rich and another poor, one person with eyes and another blind? The answers to these questions can be found in the *Vedas and in the verses quoted above*.

Let us now refer to 32, 5:

He regulates the affairs from the heaven to the earth; Then shall it ascend to him in a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count.

How do we understand the age of the world as being one day? Also, how is it that the same age of one day is called one thousand years?

In *Vaidic* tradition, the age of the world is called a kalpa, and the kalpa is called one day of Lord *Brahma*. Then after the dissolution of the earth, the time of annihilation, i.e., *Pralaya*, is called one night of Lord *Brahma*. So the world lasts for a day and goes back to the creator for a night. Similarly, according to the *Manusmriti*, in a different scale of time, the age of the world is 1000 times the total period of four ages, *Satyuga*, *Tretayuga*, *Dwaparayuga* and *Kaliyuga*. The age of the four yugas is 4320000 years in the human scale and this period is called one year of the gods. The duration of the four ages is called a Chaturyugi (four ages), and the age of the world then comes to be one thousand Chaturyugis, that is, one thousand years of the gods. *Swamiji* discusses this scale and calculation in his *Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas (Rigvedadi-bhashyabumika)*. In Islam, the prophet is regarded as a man of superhuman status. Hence the age of the world is described as 1000 years of the prophet's calculation, that is, one thousand years in the superhuman scale. That would mean that the age of the world is 1000x4320000 years in the human scale. But whether the Muslims will accept this parallel reference or not is doubtful and, otherwise, the verse is not clear because the allegory is not self-explanatory.

Let us make one more suggestion: We have earlier suggested that there was a religious link between India and the Arab world as there are ancient Arabic poems extant in praise of the *Vedas*, Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna. The Indians were, as many still are in large numbers, worshippers of a multiple god-head and multiple idols. They were worshippers of the cow as well. The Quran says in 2, 67-73 and 2, 92 that the Arabs worshipped the cow, holding it sacred as a god. Then came Moses who asked them to sacrifice the cow and worship only the one God. The cow to be sacrificed is described as intensely yellow. In India too, this cow was and is still held especially sacred and it is called *Kapila*, of intensely yellow colour. But the word 'sacrifice' should be understood in a symbolic sense, not in a literal sense. 'Sacrifice' should mean 'give up', not 'kill'. The sixth of the ten commandments is *thou shalt not kill*. If this is the commandment, how could Moses ask the people to kill? 'Sacrifice', however, does understandably mean 'give up the dearest thing.' Thus he asked them to give up the cow as an object of worship and take to, instead, the worship of one supreme God. So, it is suggested that in order to understand each other better, we should come out of our cast-iron frames of mind and share ideas and appreciate each others' beliefs and values. Unless we come to value the truth, accept the truth and give up untruth, mankind will continue positioned in warring fundamentalist camps.

*Swami* Dayananda was a courageous man. He was dedicated to truth and *Dharma*, wholly, uncompromisingly and finally. He was also dedicated to interfaith dialogue, common and positive beliefs and practices and cooperation for all-round happiness of all. He lived for this and died for

this. Interfaith dialogue and a common conclusion we owe to him and to God. If God is one, *Dharma* too is one, Truth is one, Humanity is one, and our religions too should be one, that is the dream.

There are certain questions the Quran raises but does not answer. *Swami* Dayanand raises one question in his observation no.99. The question arises from Quran 16, 36-37:

And certainly we raised, in every nation an apostle saying: Serve Allah and shun the Shaitan (idols). So there were some of them whom Allah guided and there were others against whom error was due; therefore travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejectors. If you desire for their guidance, yet surely Allah does not guide him who leads (goes) astray, nor shall they have any helpers.

Let us read these two verses with another, (14, 4):

And we did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly; then Allah makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom He pleases, and He is the mighty, the wise.

*Swamiji's* question is: If Allah sent messengers to every nation, why didn't he send any to India? Which implies that if Allah did send any to India, who was he? And in what language did he preach? There is no answer in the Quran to these questions. So that either the Quranic message is incomplete or Allah is deficient and partial. Next: If Allah did not send any apostle except in the language of his community -- as the prophet Mohammad sent to the Arabs preached in Arabic -- what is the message in Arabic doing outside Arabia in any non-Arabic country?

Further, in certain translations, as those by Rashad Khalifa and *Majid* Fakhry, 'Shaitan is translated' as 'idol-worship' and 'idol', and the idol-worshippers are in error, and they are beyond help and repair, since that is what Allah pleases. Then why not leave them alone? There is no answer to this question except that religion is the politics of power in addition to being a way of life in accordance with man's relation to God and the Prophet.

The Quran raises another question and suggests an answer, without completing it, though. The story of creation in chapter 2 says that God created Adam and Eve and placed them in Paradise, but Satan deceived them and made them disobey God's command not to approach the one forbidden tree, lest they become sinners (2, 35). When Adam was created God taught him all the names, and Adam repeated all the names before God and the angels. But after he had disobeyed God, he was ordered, alongwith his wife, to leave Paradise and live on the earth. The Bible says that the tree was the tree of knowledge, but when Adam ate of it he discovered that he was ignorant. Which means that when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he became ignorant and fell from Paradise in a state of sin and ignorance.

Still the Biblical and the Quranic tradition believes that Adam was God's first prophet. According to the Bible, too, he was taught by God but after he disobeyed he lost that knowledge. Then he lost the prophet hood and became ignorant and a sinner. This is a painful story because it means that the first man and his wife entered the earth in a state of sin and ignorance. The Bible then says that Jesus Christ redeemed mankind by paying for man's sins with his blood.

But the Quran has a different story: It says that after Adam and Eve had been ordered out of Paradise to move down to earth, "Adam received from his Lord words, whereby He redeemed him, He is the

redeemer, the merciful" (2, 37). This clearly shows that Adam received the first message of revelation after his fall from Paradise and before his entry on to the earth.

Now the question is: If Adam was the first prophet, and as the first man he was the prophet of all mankind, where is that message? The Quran has nothing to say except *words*. The Bible has nothing to say.

How to explain the content of the term words? The words are the words by which God redeemed Adam, and 'redeemed' means that He gave him back all the knowledge that he had lost through his disobedience and sin. And what was the knowledge he had earlier received? The statement in the Quran is that Adam was a *Khalif*, a representative, and as a representative, he received the knowledge of names of things. Also when Adam told the angels the names of things including the angels', God's response was: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth...." (2, 33). As a representative, Adam knew that knowledge, and through God's grace, he received it back by way of redemption.

There is a justification for this interpretation in the Christian tradition too : It is in John Milton's great epic poem, *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise lost* goes far beyond the 'Book of Genesis' of the Bible. In the poem Adam is told the story of creation through the angel Raphael, in Paradise. This story covers the story from the creation of the angels to the creation of Paradise and Adam and Eve to the point where Satan entered paradise. This part of the revelation is meant to warn him against the impending evil. Then the poem moves on upto the fall. Adam receives the command to leave Paradise through the angel Michael. Through Michael, Adam also learns the story of the world from that moment upto the end of the world. Milton gives the details of future history and the values of life which Adam and his descendants should pursue in life. Adam thus received through Raphael and Michael the secrets of the heavens and the earth which the God of the Quran speaks of in 2, 33.

Milton was a great scholar of Greek literature. He surely learnt that part of the original revelation from that literature which, unfortunately, is not common knowledge. Even the relation of *Vaidic* knowledge and Arabic history and pre-Islamic religion and culture is not known. Therefore, it is difficult to retrace the history of the spread of the *Vaidic* lore across the world. Still the community of ideas can be recognized. *Satyarth Prakash* Ch. XI speaks of this community of ideas.

In the *Vaidic* tradition, the terms for oRiginal knowledge are *Para Vidya* and *Apara Vidya*, the knowledge of the Spirit, and of nature and existence. The articulation of that knowledge is *Vak*, *Shabda*, *Word*, 'word' of the Gospel of John and 'all the names' of the Quran, 2, 31. The knowledge of the spirit and existence was inwardly revealed in the mind of four sages, *Agni*, *Vayu*, *Aditya* and *Angira*. From these the sage *Brahma* received it and transmitted it onward to mankind. There is another tradition that *Brahma* revealed the original revelation and he was the existential representative of the Supreme *Brahman*, *Father* of the Bible and the *Allah* of the Quran. That oRiginal knowledge is the *Vedas*. The meaning of the term *Veda* is *not book*, but 'knowledge', pure *knowledge* of the secrets of heaven and earth. *Veda* is that universal and eternal scripture, i.e., knowledge, which is ever existent and awake in the Universal Mind (*YajurVeda*, 34, 5), and which is described as the 'Master Register' (36, 12) or 'Glorious Quran in a protected record' (85, 21-22) - 'Umm al-Kitab' (The Mother Book) or 'al-Lawh-al-Mahfuz', or 'Kitab-al-Maknun', "The oRiginal and eternal codex of the Quran in Heaven." (Majid Fakhry, P. 276, note)

There can be revelations, (that is, inspired words and writings) subsequent to the first and oRiginal revelation. But these later revelations are all historical. They are conditioned by the circumstances prevailing around and relevant to the problems of the time. Lord Krishna says in the *Gita* (4, 7-8):

"When *Dharma* grows weak and faint and impiety and unrighteousness rule with pride, then my spirit arises on earth to save the good and destroy the evil in men." For the fulfilment of the kingdom of righteousness, the super soul descends to earth from age to age. This super soul is the Saviour, the Messiah, the Mashie, the Avatara, and, in the language of history, the reformer. His work is *Smriti* which divines into the relevant values of Shruti, the original revelation of eternal truth, and gives those values a new form for the time. As the time, the conditions and the problems change, the form too needs another change. No historical prophet is final, only the oRiginal Word is final, the rest is all interpretation, application, and reformation.

The Quran too has a permanent content which is: God is One and Absolute, He has no material form because He is formless (Nirakara), the soul is eternal too and receives its birth and death and birth again from God, the world is material and emerges from the power (*Shakti*) of God. God's essential name is Allah (Which in *Sanskrit* means 'the Mother') and his attributive names such as merciful, mighty, wise, are ninety-nine. *The rest is history*: for example, man's relation to God *through* the Prophet and the Quran, Quran as the final scripture, Mohammad as the final prophet, and the division of humanity into believers in the prophet and the Quran and the non-believers -- even though they may believe in the same eternal values and truths of life through another scripture. The largest historical portion of the Quran is the story of the tribes, lives of the prophets and Allah's dialogues with them, and the struggles of Prophet Mohammad against his opponents and the curses upon shaitans called idol-worshippers. The essence is permanent and relevant. The rest is story.

## Postscript

From a study of *Swami Dayananda's Satyarth Prakash* through these Reflections we come to the conclusion that:

1. *Satyarth Prakash* is an exposition of truth, *Dharma* and Revelation in the modern context;
2. It is an interfaith dialogue on unity of faith in the diversity of religious beliefs and practices;
3. Further, it provides a basis for free and frank dialogue on common values of faith and conduct across the globe specially in the scientific, rational and democratic climate of the world.

Truth, *Dharma* and Revelation is nobody's personal property. It is the universal heritage of mankind. The world is our home, *Dharma* is our law, and revelation is our guide. To live in the world, to claim our place in the law, and draw upon revelation is our birth right. To maintain life and the environment, to observe the law, and study the revelation is our duty and obligation.

*Swamiji* declared: The world is real, it is not a dream, it is not an illusion. It is a fact, an objective presence, not a creation of our imagination. If it were an illusion, our science and technology would be shattered, our life itself would evaporate to nothing. Whatever is, is real. Reality is truth and truth reality. All interfaith dialogue has to start here. The style of discussion has to be scientific and rational. There is no place for prejudice, fear or favour in the search for truth.

The awareness of reality is knowledge. It is the knowledge of truth. Scripture is the articulation of truth. All scriptures are believed to be divine revelations. The *Vedas*, the Bible, the Quran, etc., are believed to be divine, and yet somewhere they agree and somewhere they don't. Hence the need for dialogue. The expression of awareness in language is our human heritage of knowledge. The nature and degree of awareness expressed and the style and language of expression determines the nature and character of knowledge revealed in any scripture.

Reality and truth is two-fold: It is constant and it is variable, changing. The constant is absolute, eternal and essential, beyond time. The changing is relative, temporal and existential. The constant manifests through the changing forms. The changing and the non-changing are two modes of the same reality.

The world is a living, breathing, self-organizing, sovereign system. It is *Purusha*, a cosmic organism. It is dynamic. The dynamics of the static, and the statics of the dynamic have to be understood: The spirit of the Universe (*Ishwara/ God/ Allah*), the Atma (*Jiva/Soul/Ruh*), and *Prakriti* (Nature/ matter and energy), these are the constants, their integration in existence is the world. These constants are eternal. Of these, *Prakriti* is constant as well as variable, it remains *Prakriti* through the changing forms. *Jiva*, as *Jiva*, is integrated with the forms of *Prakriti* and, through time, gets involved as well as dis-involved with those forms according to its choice of *Karma* under the universal laws of nature. *Ishwara* is the presiding presence immanent as well as transcendent, but un-involved. Divine awareness (knowledge) is complete, final, eternal and constant because there is no increase or decrease in that. The divine awareness of the constant is *Satyam*, and the divine awareness of the changing is *Ritam*, the law of change. All religions, each in its form and idiom, accept the reality of the world and the universal laws of its dynamics. Christianity, in spite of the medieval view of the fallen nature of humanity, accepts the power and

intelligence of the human spirit. *Swami Vivekananda* revolutionized the *Neo-Vedantic* view of the world as *Maya* (illusion) to *Maya* as the real and wonderful world of nature. The law of change/existence/ *Ritam* is *Dharma*.

The main difference between different faiths is on the nature of Revelation. *Swami Dayananda* says that revelation is, and logically it has to be, original, complete and final in the very beginning of creation. It is in the original and universal language because language itself is a part of the revelation. This is the *Vaidic* view. Certain other religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism say that Revelation is historical and each new revelation supersedes the earlier ones. Yet each one says that its particular revelation with its prophet is the final. This is contradictory: They say that just as with the change of circumstances, new laws are necessary, similarly a new revelation is necessary. And yet they assert that with their particular prophet and revelation, the change and the need for change of law stopped for ever. How is this possible? Change is continuous till the end of time. It does not, and logically cannot, stop unless the world itself comes to a stop. God is omniscient, His awareness is complete, how can His revelation be incomplete? And He is kind, how can God delay the revelation? These religions say that Adam, the first man, was the first prophet and he received the first revelation. Then where is that revelation? Couldn't it be preserved as the *Veda* has been preserved? *Veda* is the first, original, complete and final revelation. Why not accept it? It belongs to all. And it is pure knowledge. There should be an interfaith dialogue on revelation and the original universal religion (*Dharma*) of mankind.

In the world context of religion today, we shall have to accept one premise: There is the one original revelation, complete and final at the beginning of creation. That is pure knowledge in the original, universal -- not historical -- language. There may be later revelations whenever the need arises as people, through change, go far away from the original revelation. Then appears a great man with a message to put people back on the original ways of life. That message would be historical because it would relate to the conditions then prevailing. It would be corrective, the corrective form too will be historical. Further, when the circumstances change, another message could be necessary.

But the fact is that such messages are believed to be new and final. And in order to justify the new message as the final revelation, it is said that God chooses history and historical language as the medium of revelation. If we accept this medium and language of revelation, we should do an exercise: Take away the element of history from such a book of revelation, also take away all that part which is relevant to the specific conditions of the time, also take away the conflictive part of this revelation, and see how much of the universal values and *dharma* remains. Thus an interfaith dialogue on the universal content of historical religions is the need of our time. That remaining part would be what *Swami Dayananda* called: '*Sarva-tantra-siddhanta*'.

Another question: Can a religion or revelation which is said to be final be only for some one community? Can that one community be the chosen people or the highest nation of God merely on the ground that it has faith in a particular book? Aren't all the people of the world children of the same one universal God?

The *Vaidic* tradition has one solution for this variety of revelations which honours all messages without idealizing one against another. It is this: The original and universal revelation is one. That is the *Vedas*, the scripture of all mankind. That is pure knowledge, no history in the *Vedas*. The later messages are all *Smritis*. The *Vedas* are *Shruti*, Revelation. The *Smritis* are historical but they all draw upon the original revelation. In an interfaith dialogue, we should find out the universal element of all the messages of different faiths, distinguish it from the historical, and accept the

universal common values as Sarva-tantra-Siddhanta, that is, the universal religion of mankind. This exercise will eliminate the interfaith conflicts of the fundamentalists now ranged in hostile camps.

In *Swamiji's* language, the fundamentals of *dharma* are the universal values found in all religions. Whatever is different and conflicting cannot be true religion.

The *Vaidic* tradition says that *Dharma* has two aspects: Sanatan (permanent and universal), and *yuga - dharma* (practice of the permanent and universal values of *Dharma* in the forms and idiom of the time). Most of the historical religions were *Yuga - Dharmas* preached by *Smritis* in particular ages for particular communities. In the modern times we need a modern form of *dharma* which can guide the entire mankind from one common platform to one common goal. This is possible when the leaders and scholars of all faiths meet with their own messages, come to a unanimous decision on the universal human values in all the scriptures and declare those values as the universal religion for all peoples of the world on the principles of common good, common happiness, justice and equality.

***Satyarth Prakash*** is a bold assertion of one universal religion for mankind on the basis of the *Vedas* and the *Smritis*. The universal basis of interfaith unity is faith in one universal God of the world, one human family, and one universal *dharma* (universal values) which can integrate the Buddhist idea of *Nirvana* as freedom from suffering, the Jain idea of all-operative *Karma*, the Islamic ideas of one absolute God, the Christian idea of love and divine grace. This integration of faith can also suggest a solution to the problem of evil and conflict through the philosophy of *Karma* and universal justice applied to the human situation.

*Swami* Dayananda was the last of the ancients and the first of the moderns. He was the first practical thinker who, about half a century before the League of Nations, floated the idea of one world government with a global constitution based on a common code of universal rights and duties. His inspiration was the last hymn of the *RigVeda* (*Sanghatan Sukta*) and the *Vaidic* principle of participative freedom subject to the savety of humanity and the environment.

"May the Lord Almighty inspire all the people of the world to come together and join as one family in one common faith of universal truth and values." This was *Swamiji's* prayer. This was the hope for mankind. This was his dream for common realization across the world.