

Course Name- B.A.L.L.B. IIInd Sem.

Subject- History

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Topic- Arya Samaj Movement

What is known as the Arya Samaj was more of an inverted movement unlike the Ramakrishna Mission, which had wider horizons. The movement that was initiated by its founder Dayananda Saraswati was more of a militant nature as it raised a banner of revolt against the popular beliefs in the light of its own interpretation of religion. It did not look for other religions for inspiration.

It would not leave the Hindu-fold for a separate identity. Instead it wanted to revive Hinduism from within. It aimed to recover the lost values of Aryanism, to re-establish the original Aryan vigor, and to reassert itself against internal and external dangers. Indirectly, it represented a reaction against the rapid invasions of Western ideas and Christianity. Inwardly, therefore, it resembled a Hindu revival.

Dayananda's Philosophy:

Dayananda studied Sanskrit, learnt the Vedas and became an erudite scholar. From his 15th year onwards he started travelling all over India. He received spiritual education from Swami Biraja

He started preaching against the falsehood of Puranic faith:

1. Vedas are the fountain source of all truth and of supreme knowledge.
2. Vedas emphasize the concept of the veritable monotheism, devotion to one formless God.

3. Like the Vedic religion, Vedic society too was a natural society without the social evils of subsequent ages.
4. There was neither the caste system nor untouchability in the Vedic age.
5. The status of women in Vedic society was one of honor, privilege, and freedom.
6. Marriage was a sacrament while the woman was a divine helpmate of man.
7. Convinced of the values of Vedic religion and social conditions, Dayananda raised the cry, “back to the Vedas”.

Arya Samaj Movement:

The ideas and feelings expressed by Dayananda took the form of a movement called the Arya Samaj, which was established in 1875 at Lahore. The samaj was required to lay absolute faith in God and in the Vedas.

It propagated the following principles:

- i. God to his followers is intelligent, existent, and blissful. He is formless, omnipotent, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchangeable, and unrivalled.

- ii. The Arya Samaj members were required to devote themselves to the physical, social, and spiritual welfare of their fellowmen.
- iii. Spreading proper education and a campaigning against ignorance or illusion were regarded as the other objectives of the samaj.
- iv. The movement influenced the people of western and northern India. Vedic rationalism and ideals appealed progressive intellectuals.
- v. Campaigned for ancient Aryan type-coeducation leading to the establishment of gurukulas or educational institutions on Vedic pattern: For example Kangri near Haridwar.
- vi. Sanskrit and Hindi became the medium of instruction in these Gurukulas even at higher stage.
- vii. The Gurukulas emphasized on character building and a spirit of service and dedication on the part of youth.
- viii. Philanthropic activities were a part of the Aryan program and the samaj established homes for orphans, widows, destitutes, and the distressed.
- ix. On a militant platform, it condemned Brahmanic rites and rituals, idol worship, and superstitious practices.
- x. It strove to bring to the untouchables the status of the Hindus belonging to the upper castes.

xi. The samaj threw open the doors of Hindu society to the non-Hindus and initiated the Suddhi Movement by which the non-Hindus could be converted to Hinduism.

xii. The samaj spread the image of Hinduism as a missionary religion by propagating its track record of embracing various non-Hindu races such as Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Sakas, and Hunas who lost their identity in Hindu society by becoming Hindus.

The Arya Samaj movement proved successful in northern India with its dynamic performance in the field of renaissance.