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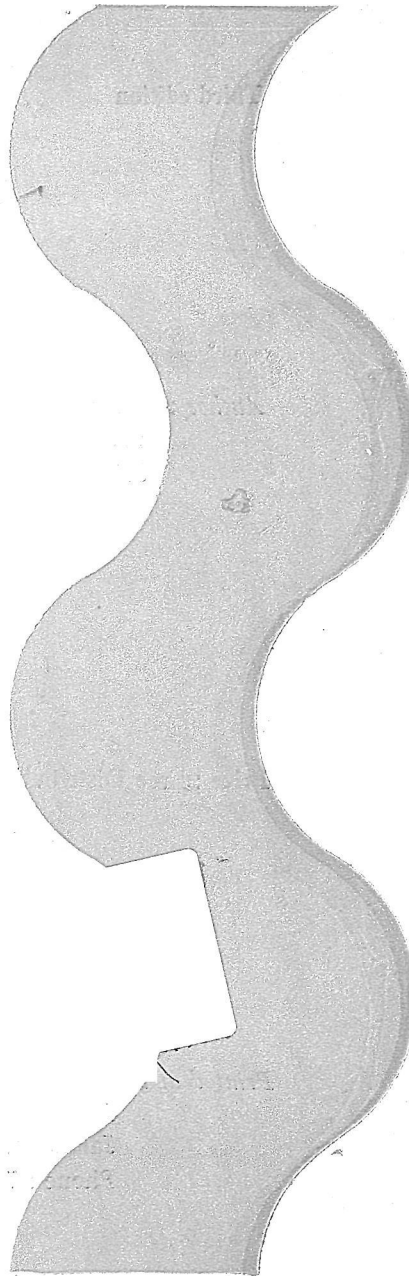
**INTRODUCTION**

To

**ARYA SAMAJ**

(An organization founded by  
Swami Dayanand Saraswati  
(1824—1883) in 1875)

Published on the occasion of  
**29th Anniversary of Arya Samaj**  
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ओ३म  
गुरु विरजानन्द दण्डी  
संदर्भ पुस्तकालय  
दयानंद महिला महाविद्यालय  
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Doing good to the whole world is  
the primary object of Arya Samaj

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THE Arya Samaj was founded by <sup>1875</sup> Mahārshi Swāmi Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) on <sup>from</sup> April... 1875 A.D. in <sup>A.S.</sup> the sacred land of Rama, Krishna, Rishis, Munis and Yogis, with the sole object of reviving the religion propounded in the oldest scripture of the world namely the Vedas. It is an established fact, which has been accepted on all hands, that prior to about 5,000 years the world knew of no religion other than the Vedic.

The claims made by Christ namely "No body cometh unto the Father but by me" and by the Muslims that Mohammed was the only prophet of God, make little sense because such claims presuppose that all the souls that lived in the billions of years since creation of the universe had no future for them until the birth of these messengers of God. Here is what Professor Max Muller says in his book "Science of Religion".

"If there is God who created Heaven and Earth, it will be unjust on His part if He deprived millions of souls, born before Moses, of His divine knowledge. Reason and comparative study of religions declare that God gave His divine knowledge to mankind from his first appearance on Earth."

Is it not very logical and scientific therefore to expect God to have given His divine knowledge to mankind from its very first appearance on earth? It would be an absurd God if this were not so. The next question arises whether God gave his divine knowledge in parts or in stages, as if to improve upon and add something to His earlier imperfect or incomplete knowlecke? God being eternally perfect the knowledge that flows from Him must also be necessarily perfect. It stands to reason that when God created man. He must have equipped him with the requisite knowledge of nature and its laws and how to conduct himself whereby to attain the ultimate purpose of life on earth namely reunion with the Creator.

It would be wrong therefore for the Hindus or any one else to claim that the Vedas belong to them only. The divine knowledge having been imparted in the beginning of the uni-

verse, the Vedas belong to mankind in general, and it has to be conceded that the knowledge contained therein is perfect, though stated in germ or seed form. Swami Dayanand therefore wanted to take the world back to the Vedas which he claimed contain perfect knowledge and guidance for mankind in full measure. The truths propounded therein have stood the test of science and reason and are fresh and applicable today as they were when originally conceived. This is the reason why unlike in the religious books of other religions, the Vedas contain no historical names and events. It may therefore be said of this fountain-head of knowledge that—

- (1) The teachings are for all men in this world without exception, for all times and for all lands.
- (2) There is nothing in them that is against the laws of creation of the world or against science or good thoughts and things.
- (3) They contain detailed knowledge for all-round development of mankind in general.

It is a fact that all the sciences and religions that are extant in the world originated in India, and thence spread to other countries. Mr. Jackoliot, a Frenchman, writes in his book "The Bible in India" that India is the source of all kinds of knowledge and good institutions and that all the sciences and religions found in the world have spread from this very country. He prays to God thus: "Mayest Thou O Lord, raise my country to that height of civilisation and progress that had been attained by India in ancient times."

In course of time the ancient practice of the study of the Vedas and Shastras died away. The Brahmans tabooed the learning of the Vedas by women and Shudras (the servantry), and themselves learnt by rote just sufficient to enable them to earn their livelihood. Even that much they did not teach to others. Deceit, hypocrisy and irreligion increased and they began to declare that salvation was not possible except by serving them. When all others became destitute of Sanskrit learning, whatever cock and bull stories the Brahmans concocted, the simpletons believed. They went so far as to say in Pandava Gita "Whatever a Brahman declares is as infallible as words falling from Divine lips."

## TOO MANY RELIGIONS

It was indifference and neglect of the teachings of the Vedas that brought about 5,000 years ago, the epic battle of Mahabharata which wrought widespread destruction of knowledge and learned men, kings and emperors all over the world. In the darkness and ignorance that ensued sprang forth four main un-Vedic religions namely Puranism, Jainism (including Buddhism), Christianity and Islam. People preached whatever fanciful theories occurred to them and began to search for logic to support their personal flights of imagination and even misdeeds. They claimed their preachings to be the word of God or gods and goddesses, and the illiterate masses credulously accepted them as gospel truths irrespective of their irrationality and absurdities. It is not surprising therefore that we find today about 1,000 different religions in the world which by and large are variations and branches of the above mentioned four main religions.

The absurdities, illogicalities and cock and bull stories found in the books of these mushroom man-made religions are too numerous to be narrated in this treatise.

The Puranas are replete with them, for example the goddess Shri produced Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadev out of blisters on her palm; the son of Brihaspati was cut into pieces which were eaten by fishes and yet he was brought back to life. Jainism propounds the ludicrous story that their first preceptor was 500 Dhanush long and 84,00,000 purva years old (One Dhanush is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times the length of a human hand and a Purva is equal to  $70,56,000 \times 10,00,000$  years). Christianity claims that Christ once fed 4,000 men besides women and children with just seven loaves of bread and a few fishes; that all souls will dwell in tombs until the day of resurrection when the dead will come out and talk to Christ. Islam promises its followers a paradise somewhere in the sky where exist rivers of wine, milk, honey and virgins of stainless beauty.

In spite of the fact that the type of cock and bull stories just enumerated are difficult for any intelligent man to believe to be true, the fact is that vast masses, steeped in deep ignorance, are found to be worshipping innumerable gods and goddesses. Jainism and Buddhism were the direct result of

drift from the Vedas which contain no mention of religions. Nor is there any mention of these in the Rigveda or Mahabharata.

### BEFORE DAYANAND

When Swami Dayanand, after finishing his education at the feet of the blind Sannyasi Swami Virjanand, appeared on the scene in the latter half of the nineteenth century, he acted on his preceptor's mandate to sacrifice his all in the cause of eradicating ignorance and dispelling darkness from the world. He found that while some religions like Jainism and Buddhism did not believe in the very existence of God, others believed in innumerable gods and goddesses, prophets and messiahs. People worshipped not only the idols in temples but also trees, tombs, rivers, mountains, snakes, etc. etc. The practice of sacrifice to propitiate gods and goddesses was common among the educated classes.

In the social sphere there were malpractices such as widow marriage (there were child widows as young as one year old), widow marriage was out of the question—in some parts of India widows were required to shave their heads and wear the traditional red clothes throughout their life, education of women was taboo, untouchability was practised in its full form, women and the so-called untouchables were not allowed to read or even hear the Vedas and Shastras. Other objectionable practices were the feeding of Brahmanas in the name of that whatever was fed and offered unto them would go to the souls of one's deceased ancestors; the erroneous belief that bathing in holy waters (even if dirty) washes away all sins and brings salvation.

It is common knowledge that a prodigious amount of evil has been wrought by bigotry, obstinacy, jealousy, malice and useless wrangling among followers of different religions. Swami Dayanand felt convinced that there could be no peace on earth unless all people worshipped the same formless God Who is the creator, sustainer and ruler of the universe.

### THE CRUSADE

Swami Dayanand's soul revolted against the state of affairs and he started a crusade against what he considered to be opposed to the dictates of reason and knowledge.

pursuit of his mission to eradicate ignorance and superstition, he wandered from place to place delivering speeches, holding debates with leaders of different un-Vedic faiths and protagonists of ignorance.

In order to propagate his views and to carry his mission forward, he founded the Arya Samaj (Arya means good and noble and Samaj means society) and prescribed ten principles for its guidance, the first three of which form the cornerstone of the Vedic religion :—

1. **The first (Efficient) cause of all true knowledge and all that is known through knowledge is God.**
2. **God is true personification of existence, consciousness, and bliss. He is formless, omnipotent, just, merciful, unborn, infinite, unchangeable, beginningless, without parallel, the support of all, master of all, omnipresent, omniscient, un-aging, immortal, fearless, eternally pure and creator of the universe. He alone is worthy of being worshipped.**
3. **The Vedas are the scriptures of true knowledge. It is the foremost duty of all Aryas to read and teach them, have them read and preach them.**

As the masses were steeped in deep ignorance and blinded prejudice, and their leaders in the interests of self-perpetuation will not bolster up courage to declare openly that some of the incredible absurdities contained in their religious books are opposed to the dictum of knowledge and scientific truths, any individual or society which dare criticise all illogical faiths must necessarily have evoked the antagonism and opposition of bigoted adherents of those religions, as their vested interests demanded that their blind followers should not be awakened and weaned from them. Swami Dayanand was no exception to this sort of antagonism and was abused, stoned and even poisoned seventeen times by those who could not answer his criticism by reasoning and felt that ending his life was the easiest way of perpetuating their hold on the masses. Finally a deadly poison mixed in milk was administered to him by bribing his cook and the revered Swami left for his heavenly abode at the age of 59, leaving his unfinished work in the hands of the Arya Samaj.

### SWAMI DAYANAND'S MOTIVE

Swamiji and his mission have been misunderstood and misrepresented by many a man and society. But the Mahārshi bore no ill-will against any religion or society. This is amply borne out by what he wrote in the introduction to his immortal book "Satyārtha Prakash" or the Light of Truth :—

"I believe in a religion based on universal and all-embracing principles which have always been accepted as true by mankind and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind in the ages to come. That alone I hold to be acceptable which is worthy of being believed by all men in all ages. I do not entertain the least idea of founding a new religion or sect. Had I been biased I would have championed any one of the religions prevailing in India, but I have not done so. On the contrary I do not approve of what is objectionable and false in the institutions of this or any other country, nor do I reject what is good and in harmony with the dictates of true religion ; since such a conduct is wholly unworthy of man. A man should, as far as it lies in his power, constantly endeavour to undermine the power of the unjust and strengthen that of the just. He may have to bear any amount of terrible suffering, he may even have to quaff the bitter cup of death in the performance of the duty which devolves on him on account of being a man, but not shirk it.

"My criticism is not actuated by malice or desire of injuring any body's susceptibilities. I have written this book in order that the followers of various faiths and all others may not have to make much effort in discriminating between truth and falsehood. I have therefore placed before the public the teachings of the four main religions (Puranic, Jainism (including Buddhism, Christianity and Islam) and also of the branches of Puranism prevalent in India as enunciated in their basic books. Leaving aside partiality, a study of these will reveal to every body what is truth and what is falsehood. If the reader does not feel obliged for this labour of mine, he should at least not oppose me because my object is not to harm or oppose any body but only to enable truth being distinguished from untruth. Every body should do likewise, for the purpose of man's life is to discover truth and not to enter into controversies and antagonism. The harm that has been done, is being done and will be done because



of the controversies between various religious faiths can be easily imagined by impartial learned men. So long as mutual unrealistic enmity between religions persists, there will be no peace for humanity. Unless all men, particularly, the learned among them, after sifting truth from untruth decide to discard the latter, it is not possible to establish perfect peace on this planet of ours. It is a fact that if the learned men, overcoming desire to perpetuate themselves in their position, start thinking of the welfare of the masses, there will be only one religion in the whole world. May God give us the courage to adopt one universal religion."

### **BIGOTRY AND CONTUMACY**

The fact that despite the discoveries of science and spread of education, people are not prepared to disavow the irrational teachings of their religions shows that it is blind faith, bigotry, contumacy or expediency that stands in their way, and that they lack the requisite moral courage to say or do what they feel to be right. Take for instance, the Christian or Muslim belief that there is no transmigration of soul. Numerous cases have appeared in the press of children in various localities in more than one country bringing with them reminiscences of previous lives. The truth of their accounts has been tested and found to agree with facts. Child prodigies known to be masters of certain arts without receiving even a rudimentary training in this life have found to exist in all countries. Yet all Christian and Muslim brethren will not declare their acceptance in this phenomenon of the soul simply because the Bible and the Quran preach otherwise. This shows that they are not prepared to accept the truth and give up untruth.

In his book "My own beliefs and unbeliefs" Swami Dayanand wrote "My sole object and attempt is to make all men in the world happy by spreading the whole truth, uniting all in one religion, removing all enmity and making all men really and firmly love one another. Let this right resolve and principle spread soon every where in this world. And this is what the Arya Samaj has at heart. It is thus quite wrong to dub it, as some do, as a communal body.

Swami Dayanand could have, like the founders of so many other religions, associated his name with what he preached but he did not do so and said that what he preached

was the correct interpretation of the Vedas. All that he wished was that people all over the world should dispassionately and without prejudice weigh his criticism of their faiths. The fourth principle of the Arya Samaj accordingly says : **“One should always be ready to accept truth and give up untruth.”** And truth is one and one only and stands unchanged for all times—past, present and future,

### CAUSES AND CURE OF UNREST

The whole world is at present afflicted with untold misery and unrest. The root cause of unrest is lust for power and wealth. The stronger nations want, by hook or by crook, to expand their territories by grabbing what rightly belongs to others. Similarly they want to grow rich by exploiting the underdeveloped countries. Jealousies, hatred and enmities breed in consequence. Two big wars during the present century have wrought untold destruction and misery to the warring nations and their allies. The tragedy however is that man has not learnt any lesson so far and preparations are under way in right earnest for a third conflagration. This state of affairs will not be remedied so long as man does not cease to be selfish and learn to act according to the dictates of his conscience as against his whims and wishes. Swami Dayanand therefore enjoined in the fifth principle of the Arya Samaj :—

**“One should do every thing according to the dictates of Dharma, i.e. after due reflection over right and wrong.”**

### A HAPPY WORLD

What a utopia this world would become if all the societies and nations of the world adopted and acted on the sixth principle of the Arya Samaj honestly and in right earnest? It reads :

**“Doing good to the whole world is the principal object of this society i.e. to look to its physical, spiritual and social welfare.”**

Is it not sheer parochialism and selfishness that leads to one set of people exploiting the weaker and less educated peoples of other countries? When the latter wake up in

course of time, the former are reluctant to stop exploitation and bickerings, jealousies and wars result. If every body placed service of humanity before self, there would be peace and happiness all round.

Can there be a broader conception of human and sub-human brotherhood? The chairtable outlook preached in this principle extends to all communities and all countries alike—not to members of Arya Samaj only but to the entire world. The principle, as it is worded, is in its simplicity most perfect—something which it will always be impossible to improve upon. The humanitarian outlook can be no more broadened, the impetus to fraternity can goad no further.

### LET ALL ONE'S DEALINGS BE REGULATED BY LOVE AND JUSTICE

The seventh principle of the Arya Samaj reads as under :  
“All one's dealings should be regulated by love and dharma i.e. what is right and noble) and as be appropriate in given circumstances.”

While ‘love all’ is a very laudable principle and the keynote of the mutual relations of persons, classes, communities and nations, its practice has been carried to a fault by the misguided votaries of Ahimsa (non-violence). We read of men whom the popular mind reveres and adores as saints showering love and favours where punishment would be the appropriate instrument of reform. Christ, for instance, said “Turn the left cheek when the right is beaten.” There are numerous such preachers among Hindus especially the Jains. Swami Dayanand himself paid his cook (who had administered him a deadly poison which eventually caused his death) some money to flee and escape the clutches of law.

While this code of conduct is all right for a Sannyasi who has renounced the world and has learnt to identify himself with all living beings, it is dangerous to be practised by wordly men without the qualification of the formula *yathayogya*, that is in accordance with the condition and merits of the recipient. Acting in accordance with the sentiment of unqualified love, the illiterate masses are found to feed snakes and ants and there have been cases in history in

which tyrants were pardoned and let go scot free only to find them attacking again.

Swami Dayanand therefore prescribed a somewhat different code of conduct for worldly people, namely that all one's dealings should be guided by love and dharma but *yathayogya* that is as be appropriate in each case. Thus on catching a thief he should be handed over to the police but not with a view just to see him punished out of revenge, but in a *spirit of love*, wishing that the punishment would reform him. Showing indulgence where an individual deserves indignation and punishment is, to say the least, abuse of love. The conduct prescribed in the foregoing principle finds support from Lord Rama's action in killing Bali and Ravana and Lord Krishna being instrumental in the destruction of the Kauravas.

### PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE AND DISPEL IGNORANCE

Promotion of knowledge and dispelling of ignorance is prescribed as the life-long goal of an Arya Samajists. Knowledge, according to the *Arya Shastras* is right knowledge, knowledge born of the Vedas, knowledge which enables us to discriminate between right the wrong, between what tends to our good and what leads to our virtual ruin. The furtherance of literacy is only a part, a minor part, of the educational programme laid down by Swami Dayanand. Not simply schools but whole lives of human beings have to be made the instruments of realisation—*Vidya*, *Vidya* as conceived by the Rishis, is not simply knowledge in the modern sense, it is identification of one's self with the Real, the True, the Right. Hence the eighth principle of the Arya Samaj says :—

**One should promote Vidya (Realisation of Subject and Object) and dispel Avidya (Illusion).**

The Vedic religion prescribes how the minimum expectancy of human life of 100 years should be utilized. This span is divided into four equal parts of 25 years namely (1) *Brahmcharya* Ashram or student life, during which a boy is expected to devote all his energy in attaining the maximum possible height of physical and intellectual progress, (2) *Grihastha* Ashram or married life. In the course of these 25 years (which is the maximum period allowed for enjoying married life) husband and wife come in contact with the world

and all sorts of physical and mental experiences gained add to their knowledge and practical wisdom, (3) *Vanprastha* Ashram or life of a recluse. At the age, at the latest of 50 years, the couple again retires into privacy. During this period of 25 years one is expected, while learning himself, to impart the knowledge and experience gained by him to those in the first stage namely Brahmacharya Ashram, and (4) *Sannyasa* Ashram or life of renunciation. During the last 25 or more years of his life one is expected to renounce all his worldly possessions and roam from place to place propagating wisdom to worldly men. Thus, of all the agencies of humanitarian effort to secure the welfare of the world, the high goal aimed at promoting knowledge and dispelling illusion, the *Sannyasi* is the most powerful. The world today lacks this agency and is, therefore, at war with its own highest good—peace. For if every man were to realise his own ultimate identity with other men, with whom would be fight but himself? Humanity today is, alas! at war with itself.

Thus does the Arya Samaj seek to further right knowledge and dispel ignorance, to promote realisation and remedy illusion.

### SEEK WELFARE OF ALL

The ninth principle of the Arya Samaj is :—

“One should not be content with one’s own welfare alone, but should look for one’s own welfare in the welfare of all”.

This is another lofty ideal which the Arya Samaj preaches. An individual’s happiness is intertwined with the happy and unhappy state of the society to which he belongs. We rise and fall together. What is true of an individual in relation to his community or country is equally true of a country in relation to the whole world. It is due to ignoring this principle that the teachers, preceptors, authors, scientists, philosophers and businessmen of all nations today have become parochial in outlook. The result is greed, exploitation of the weak and accumulation of wealth by some nations producing discontent and jealousy in others.

An Arya Samajist gives proof of his concern for the welfare of all by a simple daily ritual of performing *havana* that is, igniting fire and making oblations of *ghi* (clarified butter) and

other odiferous, nutritious and sugary substances to the accompaniment of Vedic verses. The sole object of this act is to purify the air which every body breathes—not the performer alone but his neighbours and enemies, if any, also. At the end of each verse he says “Idam na mam” which means that this oblation is not for myself but for the good of whole humanity. Now what can be a better cosmopolitan mentality? From all other forms of charity one can expect, and does generally expect, some sort of return—publicity and praise if nothing else. What return or reward can the performacy of *havana* expect except the self-satisfaction that he has rendered a selfless service to humanity?

If such were the mental outlook of every living human being of *vying* with one another to do something daily for others' welfare, who will then fight whom?

#### DUTY—PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

The tenth and last principle of the Arya Samaj reads :—  
**“One should regard one's self under restriction to follow  
 truistic rules of society, while in following the rules of individual  
 welfare all should be free.”**

This principle is designed to make simple the conflict that may sometimes arise between the personal and social obligations of a man. There are occasions when private rights have to be zealously guarded, while at the same time there is a demand on our conscience of public interest which seems to require sacrifice, not only of personal interest but also of personal liberty. Which way shall one then follow? There could be no corporate existence if the rights of the individual and the combined claim on him of the corporation of which he is a member, were not clearly demarcated, one from the other.

We have to abide by the rules, whether by our own lights or by the rights of the majority of our fellow workers. The principle indicates the respective sphere of each of these lights. Independence would be license, if it were to be interpreted as liberty to shirk discipline, to flout rules. The golden rule propounded by Swami Dayanand is that the voice of conscience, our unfailing internal monitor, is our last moral mentor. The voice of the majority must however be allowed to prevail in

matters of procedure. For example, on the outbreak of war, when the whole nation entrusts the helm in the hands of a single captain, the rules framed by him must be obeyed unquestioningly. In other words, if the obedience or disobedience of the command affects his person alone he is free to obey or disobey it. Where, however, the social welfare is at stake, the individual must unconditionally submit to the will of all. Thus all moral laws laid down by the society must be observed by all.

### BELIEFS OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

To sum up, the Arya Samaj believes that :—

(1) He who is called *Paramatma* or the Supreme Spirit, Who permeates the whole universe ; Who is existence, consciousness and bliss personified ; Who is holy, omniscient, formless, all-prevading, unborn, infinite, almighty, just and merciful, Who creates, subsists and dissolves the universe, Who awards all souls the fruits of their deeds in strict accordance with the requirements of absolute justice—He is the Great God and to Him alone is worship due.

(2) The Vedas are the repository of knowledge and religious truths. They are the word of God and absolutely free from error. They are an authority unto themselves—in other words were given to man when the universe was created.

(3) Three things are beginningless and infinite, namely God, Soul and Matter. While God is existence, consciousness and bliss personified, the soul is existence and consciousness and matter is existence only.

(4) The purpose of creation is the essential and natural exercise of the creative energy of God. His creative energy can be exercised and the souls can reap the fruits of their deeds only when the world is created.

(5) The class and order of an individual should be determined by his merits and not by his birth.

(6) *Tirtha* is that by means of which the 'ocean of misery' is crossed. It consists in the practice of truthfulness in speech, in the acquisition of true knowledge, in cultivating the society of the wise and the good, in the practice of *yoga*

and the performance of good works. The so-called sacred places on land and water are not *Tirthas*.

(7) The soul is a free agent to do deeds but is subservient to God for reaping the fruits thereof.

(8) *Swarga* (Heaven) is the enjoyment of extreme happiness and the attainment of the means thereof, *Naraka* (Hell) is another name for undergoing extreme suffering.

### CONCLUSION

The Arya Samaj, as has been stated earlier, means the society of the good and the noble. We are not, however, so presumptuous to claim that every member of this society today is good and noble as she should be. But we make bold to say that the golden principles of the Society, which constitute its fundamental manifesto, which were laid down by its far-sighted founder—Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati—are worthy of being followed by all right thinking and unbiased people all over the world and at all times. And if they do so, there would be all round prosperity and perfect peace and harmony on this planet of ours.

We invite every thinker who wants to save the world from war and devastation to contribute towards propagation of the code of conduct enshrined in its principles, for then only will the objectives, desires and thoughts of all run in one line and they will be able to live like one family.

“Mayest Thou, who art friend of all, holiest of all and controller of the Universe, be merciful unto us. Mayest Thou, O God Almighty, Lord of the Universe, support of all, endow us with knowledge and power. Mayest Thou, O omnipresent and omnipotent being, shower Thy blessings all around us.”  
(Rig Veda)

गुरु विरजानन्द दण्डाः—  
सन्दर्भ पुस्तकालय

पत्रिग्रहण क्रमांक  
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