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# VEDIC DHARMA & YOUNG INDIA

**A PAPER READ BY**

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**HEAD MASTER GURUKULA ACADEMY;**

AT

**A CONFERENCE OF THE ARYA KUMAR SABHA LAHORE,**

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*The Vedic Dharma and Young India.*

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Gentlemen ! When I was asked by the Secretary of the Arya Kumar Sabha, to write out a paper on the above subject I felt considerable hesitation in accepting the invitation. It was not merely because I was overworked, that my mind waivered between a *yes* and a *no*, although that too was one of the contributory causes. But the main cause was this that I felt myself quite incompetent for the task. How could I, a young man myself,—perhaps even younger than some of your members—undertake to advise you? Advice and counsel are most effective only when they are offered by men of mature experience, deep learning and profound scholarship. I possess none of these qualifications ; yet if I have accepted the honor, it is for another reason which to me appeals with greater force than those that suggested a contrary course of action.

Although my youth and inexperience are a disqualification, from one point of view they are a strong recommendation from another. I am a young man whose heart beats in unison with yours. I have many a time and oft felt the throbs and heartbeatings of some of you, have hob-nobbed with you, suffered with you, wept with you and shared yours joys and woes. I know wherein lies your strength and also what are your frailties and foibles. Being one of you I am not entitled to speak—and you will never forgive me if I did—in a lofty and stilted strain, in chilling and supercilious tones expressive of stern rebuke and stinging censure or in the patronising style of conscious pity and condescension. I am on the same plane of intellectual and moral effort as you are, and, therefore, while addressing you on the subject of our common weaknesses, cannot even for a moment lose sight of the temptations and allurements that surround the juvenile life. With those remarks I bring the introductory part of the essay to an abrupt termination. The first thing essential for an Aryan Youngman who aspires to spread the light of Vedic truth among his compeers is the cultiva-

tion of truly Aryan virtues. No one condemns hypocritical conduct more than I do. Very few among you have satirized out-worldly sanctimonious behaviour more ruthlessly than I have. I detest the tone of mock and unnatural gravity assumed by some ambitious young men. But in spite of all that I hold that too much frivolity interferes with intellectual discipline and moral advancement. Our scriptures enjoin upon all preachers the paramount necessity of taking things seriously. A youthful preacher may be as cheerful, sprightly and vivacious as he likes—for an exuberance of animal spirits is not so dangerous as an utter lack of them—but let him not be trivial and frivolous on solemn occasions. “Take not the name of the Lord in vain” embodies a lofty principle of conduct. Self restraint is the *a. b. c.*, of all discipline and the basis of all healthful activity, whether moral or intellectual. He who speaks lightly of the Vedic Religion—though in fun only—and does not think himself morally culpable if he talks to his friends in undertones when a solemn function is being discharged lays himself open to a serious charge and is utterly unfit for the holy and responsible task of influencing the conduct of others and directing their attention to the grave, philosophical, sociological and metaphysical problems discussed and elucidated in the *Vedas* and *Shastras*—no matter what his other qualifications are. Again do not pour pungent and incisive ridicule upon those that have been seduced from the path of rectitude. If he who indulges in drolley on the occasion of a sad demise is charged with levity of conduct and becomes an object of universal disdain how can you tolerate in decent society a man who gloats and jubilates over the spiritual ruin of a brother and takes ogreish and demoniac delight in dwelling on the moral weaknesses of a wretch in a spirit of unbecoming banter and unworthy derision. Our outward conduct is but the expression and materialisation of the inmost tendencies of thought and feeling which interpenetrate our intellectual moral upbuilding.

Let us, therefore, remember that if we treat lightly matters which are of supreme importance to the welfare of humanity and cultivate the habit of talking scandal we will only be sapping the

foundations of character. At best we will deserve the appellation of characterless persons, and a characterless person who takes nothing seriously and pounces like a voracious and rapacious vulture on the character of a fellow-being whenever he perceives or fancies he perceives a weakness may be dreaded but can never be loved. Love and sympathy win the most abduurate hearts. By means of the divine alchemy of sympathy the most adamantine hearts have been turned into wax. Sympathy—generous sympathy, large hearted sympathy—should be the key note of the character of those of us that honestly desire to push forward the cause of the holy church of the Lord, and to enlist under the holy and consecrated standard of Om. Philosophical controversies, polemics and logamachies appeal only to the intellect but conversions are oftener than not made by appeals to the heart—the seat of emotions. The magic touch of sympathy and love—sympathy born of a true insight into the difficulties and complexities of awkward situations and quandries and love begotton of an unselfish desire to seek one's happiness in the happiness of others—cures intellectual perversity of the worst description when stronger—by which I mean purely intellectual—remedies fail. If you, members of the Kumar Sabha are sincerely desirous of carrying the torch of the Vedic Dharm far and wide—and of this I entertain no doubt—cultivate these divine virtues. Let the character of each one of us be a centre of light and a repository of inspiration. Let us make an effort to convert our church into a church triumphant. Let us fight the demons of unbelief, heresy, infidelity, atheism, eclecticism, materialism and machivialism with the irresistible weapons of sweet reasonableness, unfailing sympathy and unselfish love. Let us display and feel a sympathetic concern for the well-being of those who come in contact with us and win their hearts. Do not become professional critics and do not take upon yourself the duty of animadverting adversely on the conduct of each and all. Remember what Sir Arthur Helps says “ Now it would be hard for a man to live with another who was always criticising his actions, —it would be like living between two glasses of a microscope. But these self-elected judges, like their prototypes, are very eager to bore the persons they judge, brought before them in the guise

of culprits." Let me not be misunderstood. I do not, by any means, hold that we should not denounce error or should effect a compromise with sin. I do not advocate what John Stuart Mill calls, "Moral bribery and subornation of the understanding." All that I insist upon is that we should learn to distinguish between the sin and the sinner, the offence and the offender. The former deserves nothing but unmitigated contempt, concentrated scorn and unmeasured denunciation, but the latter merits pity, compassion and commiseration. If we follow this golden rule of conduct we shall have the satisfaction of feeling that while our righteous efforts are eradicating wrong-doing, they are not creating implacable and unforgiving enemies for us. Gentlemen! I am speaking from personal and bitter experience and that is the reason why I have dilated so much on this point. I earnestly desire that my friends may escape from the snares in which I fell and may ever remain on the *quivare* against pitfalls which I could not avoid. Circumspection and caution are needed everywhere. Quite unconsciously and without any *malice prepense* you come down upon a man whom you regard and honestly regard a moral delinquent. You are actuated by no other desire than that of reforming him and of rescuing others from falling into the dark dismal and abysmal pit. Your motives are misunderstood. The offender is exasperated beyond measure and persists in his conduct with a view to spite you. But you become a scapegoat to be sacrificed at the convenience of those who are ensconced behind the scenes with the leading strings of many a marionette and puppet like you in their hands. Now to the practical means of spreading the Vedic Dharm and of making the Arya Kumar Sabha of Lahore a power in the province. I think that the real strength of a movement resides in its organisation. Let your organisation be strong. Let your members learn the value of discipline and the necessity of obeying implicitly all legitimate commands issued constitutionally by the executive officers of the Sabha. Let your debates be carried on in a dignified and decorous manner in the spirit of "give and take." Let the Arya Kumar Sabha be a central bureau of information where all young men—irrespective of caste colour or creed—may come and seek guidance with respect to all matters—

religious, social, moral and educational. Let your library be stocked with decent books of all sorts and descriptions. Does a student want to read a high-class periodical? Let him direct his footsteps to the reading room of the Arya Kumar Sabha. Are their athletes among young men? Let them become members of your sports club. Are there any aspiring young men desirous of gaining information about the courses of study in foreign universities? Let them come to your library and study the calendars. If a student who has no friends or acquaintance at Lahore is seized with a serious malady let the medical officer of your Sabha attend him gratis and let the members of your *Sevak Mandali* nurse him with fraternal affection and heartfelt solicitude. If a poor student is in need of books or has not the wherewithal to pay his university fee let the coffers of the Sabha supply him with the necessary funds, either by way of a loan or as a free gift. If there are inveterate smokers in a college let the members of your band of hope approach them and by the effective employment of the sweet art of suasion wean them from their habit. Arrange intercollegiate debates every now and then and thus try to spread healthy ideals among young men. Let your programme be so comprehensive that it may embrace all healthful activities. Let your Sabha become an indispensable factor in the life of every student at Lahore, no matter what his religious beliefs are, no matter whether he is sociable or misanthropic, bigotted or broad minded, a friend of the Arya Samaj or its enemy. I know that Rome was not built in a day. I know that steady and persistent efforts will have to be made before we are in sight of the goal. I know that the scheme that I have laid before you requires prodigious expenditure of energy and money and a perfect organization of resources and that in order to carry it out in all its details you will have to look up to your elders for help and guidance—and these are hard to obtain in these days of ceaseless activity and of constant drain upon the mental energies of public leaders. But let our Ideal be grand and lofty. Let us live in the hope of seeing it realized some day. Let us work with the end steadily in view and when we retire leave this holy work as a legacy to our successors. Let us not be discouraged by failures or depres-

ed and disheartened by disappointments and seemingly insurmountable impediments. Let us seek solace in the saying of the great sage **Manu** that “*Satya Meva Jaete Nanritam*” and in the assurance held out to us by the greatest man of the modern world —by him whose own life was an object lesson in complete triumph over difficulties the very thought of which would have daunted an ordinary mortal—that *Dharm Yukta Purusharath Kabhi Nishphal Nahin Jata*. When we are overtaken by despair and attacked by a fit of pessimism, let us follow the advice of Carlyle and “await the issue” for “in all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right and his might, which at the close of the account were one and the same. He has faught with all his might, and in exact proportion to all his right he has prevailed His very death is no victory over him. He dies indeed ; but his work lives, very truly lives.” Listen to the distant voice of Longfellow and :—

Build to-day, then strong and sure,  
With a firm and ample base ;  
And ascending and secure, shall to-morrow find its place.

In the end I wish that each of us could say to day with a feeling heart :—

Let us then be up and doing  
With a heart for any fate  
Still achieving, still pursuing  
Learn to labour and to wait.

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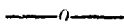
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## THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ARYA SAMAJ.



- 1.—God is the primary cause of all true knowledge, and of everything known by its means.
- 2.—God is All-truth, All-knowledge, All-beatitude, Incorporeal, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unbegotten, Infinite, Unchangeable, without a beginning, Incomparable, the Support and the Lord of all, All-pervading, Omniscient, Imperishable: Immortal, Exempt from fear, Eternal, Holy and the Cause of the universe. *To Him alone worship is due.*
- 3.—The Vedas are the Books of true knowledge, and it is the paramount duty of every Arya to read or hear them read, to teach and preach them to others.
- 4.—One should always be ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.
- 5.—All actions ought to be done conformably to virtue, *i. e.*, after a thorough consideration of right and wrong.
- 6.—The primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical, spiritual and social condition of mankind.
- 7.—All ought to be treated with love, justice and due regard to their merits.
- 8.—Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge diffused.
- 9.—No one ought to be contented with his own good alone; but every one ought to regard his prosperity as included in that of others.
- 10.—In matters which affect the general social well-being of the whole society one ought to discard all differences and not allow his individuality to interfere, but in strictly personal matters every one may act with freedom.

(From the "Hand-book of the Arya Samaj.")