CHAPTER IX
LITERARY WORKS OF SWAMI DAYANANDA
AND VEDIC COMMENTATORS
(A) An assessment of literary works of Dayananda:

The greatbooks of famous thinkers are well-known, the chief architect of vedic dharma in India in the 19th century, Swami Dayananda Saraswati's 21 works are also works of great merit.

1. *The Sanskar Vidhi* - This is a treatise on Sanskars or ceremonies to be observed by a profile in his life time. It does not contain any elaborate ritual in the connection with the post cremation rites of an Arya Samajist.

The 16 samaskara are (1) Garbhadhan (conception), (2) Punsavan (rites in the 2nd or 3rd year of pregnancy), (3) Semantonnyam rites to be performed in the 4th, 6th and the 8th month, (4) Jat karmas (child bearing rite), (5) Nam karana (rites of naming child), (6) Nish karaman (rites at the time of taking the child out of the house in the fourth month). This is quite unique (7) Anna Prashan (feeding the child when 6 month old), (8) Churakaran (tonsure as the age of one or 3 years), (9) Karna Vedh (ear boring or nose boring at the age of 3 and 5), (10) upanayam or vedārānsā (sacred thread rite as the 8th years of a Brahman, 11th of a Kshatriya and as the 12th of a Vaishya). It is but the investiture commerating the study of the *Vedas* or his second birth. There is some apparaent contradiction in his stand as there are differences based on the birth, (11) Samavartan (rite on the return of the student from his guru's house after completion of his studies. This is not practised in many parts of India. (12) Vivah or marriage. To take place at the minimum age of 16 in case of a female, and at 25 in case of a male, (13) Grihastrashram-Rite, Householders life, (14) Vanaprasthashram-Rite of retiring from the life of the world and on the birth of a grand child or the coming of the old age. (15) Sunnyam - renunciation rite and (16) Antyeshti-Rite of cremation of the individual remains.
2. **Vedanga Prakash** - It is an illustrated grammatical work based on Panini. It consists of 16 parts: *Orthography* easy dialogues in Sanskrit, a primer, coalescence of latter and orthography, Declensions, cases, compound words, genders indclinables, the verb, Accentuation and Prosody, Technicalities, Roots, Conjugation, Word-making and Vedic vocabulary.

3. **Vedanta Viruddh mat Khandannam** - Criticism of a belief which goes against the *Vedas*. It is written in a detached question and answer form and deals with important aspects of the Vallavacharya Sect in 62 items. It is written in Sanskrit which was accompanied by a Hindi translation by Swami Krishna Verma. It is based on doctrinal issues of the Vallava sect besides the immoral practices. The Swami consulted many texts of this sect and quoted many passages from their works. This is parallel to the portion of *Satvartha Prakash* in spite of some changes here and there. It is in Gujarati and Hindi. It is also called Vallabacharya Khandana.

4. **Asthadhyayyi Bhasa** - Swami commenced a Hindi translation of Panini’s grammar but could not finish it.

5. The **Arvoddhishya** Ratana Mala - In this book one discussed Vocabulary of one hundred religions words, many of them of disputable signification. The essence of much of shastric teaching is given to the use of the learners.

6. The **Gokaruna Nidhi** - A small book showing the absolute necessity of protecting the cow specially, and the other lower animals-goats, etc., generally. It is supported by Acharya Vinoba Bhave’s stand in Sarvodya movement.

The name of some pamphlets and works, mentioned by R.C. Sharma may be mentioned :-


**Great Works :**

*Satyarth Prakash* (1st Edn.1875) - This is a book well known for his enunciation of theory of revelation in the *Vedas*. Like other great books of the world it revolutionised the religious thinking of mankind and gave the spirit of Vedic Religion. There is hardly any aspects of religion which it has not touched. It brings to the mankind back to the *Vedas*. It means the light of truth.

It deals with topics like education (3rd chapter) Varnashram (4th chapter) Vanaprastha (5th chapter), Rajdharma (6th chapter) and social problem, philosophical Topics (VII, VIII, IX) Ethical Principles (ch-X), Refutation of other schools (ch XI to XIV). The chapter dealing with criticisms are based on reason. The performance is to destroy untruth and unveil truth. The last chapter, last edition contains his belief and disbelief. In the last phase of his book he produced a revised edition of *Satyarth Prakash*.³
It is pointed out that by the time of second edition (1883) Swamiji had departed from the earlier position in connection with the scope of samhita portion, moksha/liberation in relation to karma. Omission of the special powers of sanyas is found. It is clear that his thought was moulded by new expressions, the men.

*Rigvedadi Bhasya Bhoomika* - It is a sanskrit Hindi work. This is Dayananda’s rational commentary of the *Vedas*. It is the scholarly works in series. It is written in question-answer form. He strongly condemned and contradicted the earlier interpretations of Sayana and Mahidhar. Following these works western scholars like prof. Max Muller and Wilson missed the real import of the meaning of Vedic words.

After his publication of the introduction of the *Vedas*, Max Muller felt his influence. He has succeeded in showing that the *Vedas* refute with gurus of Divine wisdom and not the Babblings of primitive sphereed as misunderstood by some European scholars.

The learned writer Bawa Chhajju Singh is of the opinion that *Vedic Bhashya Bhoomika* (the introduction to the commentary) is unquestionably Swamijis greatest work unquestionably, his study of the *Vedas* after *Satyarth Prakash* had still a long way to go.

It contains a good number of pages showing that the modern commentaries are wrong and unacceptable, it is neccessary in the interest of truth a true interpretation of the learned and the unharmed a like would be available. The Brahmans are not part of *Vedas* for they do not come from God. They are secondarily authoritative as they depend on the *Vedas*.
Only a part of the commentary on the *Vedas* was published during his life time. His followers took years to complete its publication after him. It comprises over 7000 larger pages print covering the whole of *Yajur-veda* and that of *Rig-veda* up to VII, 4:60.

This was written during the span of 6 years as an average of 1200 pages per year. It occupies much of his time.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

2. Ibid.
3. The author has committed to study the original work and their translation. 
5. The author has consulted the most of English Translation of *Satyarth Prakash* and Hindi versions on it. The thesis is based on this treatise.
(B) Dayananda and Some Important Vedic Commentators:

Interpretation of the Rig-vedic mantras is the greatest of all the problems of Hinduism, Yaska, Shandaswami Venkata, Madhava, Vararusi, Ananda tirtha, Bhatta, Haradaka and others attempted to explain the vedic mantras. They were divided in their opinion and attempts. Each commentary has its own value and serves to a certain extent in understanding the mantras, the difficulty in interpreting. The vedic mantras that is elaborated by Kutsa, which is referred to by Yaska in his Nirukta. According to Kutsa the mantras are not intelligible and so, it is of no purpose to attempt its interpretation. But Yaska contradicts this and defended his attempt at interpretation of the Vedas.

Yaska:

Yaska was a naturalist. He interpreted the vedic mantras with the help of natural phenomenon. Contemporary to Yaskas these was another school of interpreters who are called ‘Itihasakaras’. They give the meaning with the help of Puranas. As for example, the war between Devam Vritra and God Indra is frequently referred to in his vedic mantras, other legend is interpreted by Yaska as meaning between clouds and the air in the mid region, the air is called Indra. The cloud is called Vritra. The attack of the air on the cloud is metaphorically treated as a war. Pouranikies take this as actual war between demon and God. As winds exploits also are interpreted with help of natural events.

Yaska the great grammarian of the 7th century B.C. holds that all mantras have three meanings as related to three kinds of aspirants. The adhiyajna or ritualistic, adhidaivata the etymological meaning and the adhiyanvant the spiritual meaning. Plurality, trinity and unity of reality relate to the 3 kinds of suns culminates in the realisation of the spirited the same which symbolised in may forms. Everything unfortunately the works of the commentators are lost to us.
A comparative study of Yaska, Sayana, Maxmuller, Dayananda and Shri Aurobindo will reveal to us new ideas. Their interpretations serve as a key for the understanding of vedic words and mantras.

Sayana:

Sayana may be said to be the father of European vedic scholarship. Besides a prominent vedic scholar with an extensive knowledge of the Vedas he was an able administrator and Minister of state for four rulers of the Vijaya Nagar (Kampana, Sangam II, Bukka I and Harihara II) kindom. He took up Krishna Yajur-veda first in his commentary as it was his vedic branch (Sakha).

Madhava’s assigned the work of writing the Bhasya knowing his capacity and fitness for the work to his younger brother Sayana. Madhava guides him in this great venture.

Sayana (14th century A.D.) has authored 8 books out of which Veda-Bashvys is what matters most. It is a valuable commentary on the four Vedas by Sayana which constitute a stupendous feat of Sayana showing to the world his patience, his mighty intellect and his genius and will for the interpretation of the Vedas, though he stands in the unbroken tradition of commentors.

The interpretation is some what controversial but of ignorance and vanity, some of our eastern or western scholars write critically about it. However, it can be proved that none can attempt, at any time, a new commentary without reference to it. He is indebted to his predecessors and adopts both naturalitic and ritualistic methods². He is, however concerned with his age outlook.
It is upon the interpretation that the translation of Wilson, Benefy and Langlois are based. The Arya Samajists offer serious criticism against his interpretation. He made departures from the rules of Nirukta. Prof. Roth follows Yaska and repeats Sayana.

The mantra of the *Rig-Veda* IX 96 is interpreted in a defective rurhi (laukika) “God himself appears a Brahma among the Gods, Indra, Agni, etc. He appears as a part among the dramatists and writers of lyrics. He appears as Vasistha, etc. among the Brahmanas. He appears as an eagle among birds. He appears as an axe in the forest. He appears as the same juice purified by mantras excelling in its power of purification the sacred waters of the Ganges, etc.

His translation is relative to the time and popular prejudice and feeling. Pantheism, (i.e. everything is God) is predominant in his time. The people had the superstitious that the water of the Ganges were sacred, there were many incarnations. Beliefs such as the power of the Rishis, incarnations, etc. were getting the upperhand. Sayana lined in some city or town and did not live in a village. He is not much concerned with powerful agents of distinction of forest such as lightning or fire as with the axe. His translation is but the mirror of his own age and not that of the mirror of the *Vedas*. His interpretation of Brahma. Kavi, Deva and Rishi, Mahisha, Vana, Soma, Pavitra are rurhi or Laukika. Sayana is quite ignorant of Yougika, inner truthful meaning of Yaska in his *Nirukta*.

Sayana is obsessed with the naturalistic formula and forced the sense of the *Veda* into the narrow world. The European realistic theory is to be found in Sayana’s writing.

It is to be observed that intend and ritualism never decline the mantras Rituals are the production of the mantras according to *Mundakaupanishads*. Even rituals have spirited significance as symbols.
Sayana like Apasthanba, Bodhayana, Vyasa support ritualism. Eminent philosophers Sankara, Ramunuja, Madhava accepted the importance of rituals. They are unavoidable, Rig-vedic mantras are unavoidable. They have their inner meanings.

Aurobindo:

In a different approach Aurobindo feels that some of the hymns bear ritualistic-naturalistic meaning but this is not the most important mode of interpreting the hymns. He prefers the psychological-mystical approach to the physical (popular) approach. According to him the Veda has a double aspect—the inner (esoteric) and the outer (exoteric). This poet serves who composed the hymns put 2 meanings psychological for the higher people, and the physical for the masses. The Vedas serve the spiritual enlightenment and self culture. The inner meaning was dangerous to the ordinary human mind.

The psychological meaning of word cow is light, ashwa horse means energy. The fruits of vedic sacrifice; wealth of cows and wealth of horses were symbolic mental illumination and abundance of energy.

Agni, the God of fire in the physical nature is light but in psychological sense means, bright, even force, brilliance, similarly Indra represents Mind-power; Vayu means Prana or life energy.

From the external standpoint the Gods are universal powers of Nature personified, in the inner sense they are powers of nature in her subjective activities well, mind, etc.
He has advantage over the classical interpretation of Sayana on the one hand over those of modern scholars on the other. Sayana was compelled to give variable significance to the word R̄t̄am such as truth, more often “Sacrifice” occasionally in the sense of water. The psychological word R̄t̄am is the sense of truth invariables. Similar the case of dhi in the sense of thougth, prayer, action, food, etc. by Sayana. In the psychological sense of Aurobindo, it is thought or understanding.

The Hymn of the Vedaś are legacy of Age of Intuition. According to him the Upanishads mark the later phase which is the nature of reasons of reasons. The Upanishads attempted to recapture the soul of the Vedaś.

Aurobindo rejects the theory of degrading the Vedaś the level of an ancient document of barbarism. Rammohan stopped short of the Upanishads. Dayananda looked beyond and percieved that our true original seeds was the Vedaś. He was able to make it lumineous-on intuition in the place of an instinct.

Aurobindo’s slogan is ‘go back’ to the Vedaś. The Vedaś are the original foundation of Indian wisdom. He like Dayananda maintains that the vedic significance had been obscured by excessive dependence or Sayana’s interpretation and efforts of western schoolars. Swami Dayananda and Bankim Chandra Chaterjee attempted to make the corrections. But they lacked the scholarly equipment, the philosophic insight and the knowledge of comparative religion that Aurobindo possessed. The Upanishads and the Gitas marked the continuation of the Vedaś attitude on many important issues.

The true of Indian culture is rooted i.e. the Vedaś. However the roots and stem do not by themselves make the tree without the fruit and flowers. The roots deserve their nourishment from various sources.
Aurobindos under estimates the non-orthodox traditions like the
Buddhism, Islam, Saints-Poets of medieval India and far teaching
revolution of Gandhi.

He holds that the *Vedas* are the sources of our knowledge and guide
actions. Being truly national thinker of India he proves that the *Vedas* are
not merely pastoral song and the primitive literature of humanity as the
western scholars and their Indian followers have held; like Dayananda he
tried to prove that the *Vedas* as the source of true knowledge are the guides
for humanity and as such they deserve to be the standing by all. The *Vedas*
are replete with mystic philosophy and occult knowledge.

Max Muller:

He was the first to publish the Devanagari text of the *Rig-Veda* with
Sayana’s commentary. Because of his popularisation of Sanskrit in Europe
and productin of *Rig-Veda* he used to sign as Moksha Muller Bhatta. He
got the support of the Directors of the East India Company to finance the
project of compiling and publishing the *Rig-Veda* with the commentary of
Sayana in 1849. It was dedicated to Her majesty Queen Victoria of Great
Britian, Ireland and The Empress of India. Sanskrit is the grand mother of
many languages and the *Rig-Veda* as the first book of mankind.5

Max Muller, the German philosopher (Moksha Muller as the Indian
sanskritists lovingly call him) was a great orientalist in the Victorian era. He
was responsible for the excellent edition of the sacred books of the East
series through the patronage of Queen Victoria. He along with other schol-
ars did a great service to the cause of Indian culture by making the vedic
literature available to the modern mind. For them, the *Vedas* were the
hymnal of an early primitive and largely barbaric society, crude and rude in
its social structure, childlike in th social outlook and the environment.
The hymns are considered to be the out powerings of a primitive people in personifying natural powers. They tried to propitiate the Gods in order to receive the blessings and helped them in warding off the fury of Gods. According to Max Muller there is an evolution of religious consciousness from polytheism, through what Max Muller calls henotheism to monotheism and monism. They took the word vedic to be confined to samhita or collection of hymns to be the earliest and the best. The latest hymns to be composed are those which have some philosophical basis. They constitute the transition to the \textit{Upanishads}.

Max Muller has taken great pains to explain the term Henotheism, i.e. the idea of one God head underlying all Gods. Is henotheism the religion of the \textit{Vedas}? Is it an essential feature of vedic worship? According to Swami Dayananda, the \textit{Vedas} are the purest record of the highest form of monotheism of the Aryans-Yaska says- “Devata is a general term applied to those substance whose attributes are explained in a mantra. Devata is the index, the key note of the meaning of mantra. There is no reference to God, Goddess no mythology, no henotheism”.

There are thirty three devatas which manifest the glory of God, 18 Vasus, 11 Rudras, 12 Adityas, Indra, Prajapati on the whole mankind in the \textit{Vedas}.

The interpretation of the word Devata given by Yaska is the only interpretation which is supported by the \textit{Vedas} and the Brahmins. Yaska had no idea of idolatry, henotheism or devata worship which was popularised by Max Muller, they are foreign to the age of Panini and Yaska. Max Muller is influenced by Dayananda when he wrote “Is India Civilised”.
Swami Dayananda:

Swami paved the way for the approach of a through spiritual outlook in the interpretation of the *Vedas*. The difference between other reformers and Dayananda lies in the fact that while they were influenced in one way or another by light from the western world, Swamiji was wholly untouched by any influence as he mentioned of Arya. Arya his outlook and spiritual constitution in the role of a teacher. This constitutes the uniqueness among the reformer of our times. In him we find Hinduism in its pure form.

To Dayananda the *Vedas* are revealed texts of eternal truth and hence he did not concern himself in searching history, mythology on legends of the *Vedas*.

His interpretation is the amalgam of the three traditional approaches—the psychical, phenomenal and spiritual. His commentary on the *Rig-Veda* and *Yajur-Veda* deserve serious study.

He has made and the situations he had encountered. His position appears to be a dynamic thinker on this basis although he was in an unchanging mood. There are noticed in due place in the thesis.

This is an ideological treatise. He provided in his treatise an explanation of the present decadent state of Hinduism. In his opinion the *Mahabharata*, the great war of antiquity, had state of a loss of carrier Vedic knowledge. As a sequence there was a lengthy process of decline among the Hindu. The Hindus were again defeated by the Muslims and the Christian English. The Hindus as he saw them as a defeated people become stepped in error and superstitions.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

(B)

2. Loc cit.
4. Vide Shri Aurobindo’s Hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.
5. Vide a review article “Vedic Hermeneutics” by Dr. Prof K. Satchidananda Murty, New Delhi, 1993, included in the journal of *Indian Council of Philosophical Research* (ed) by Daya Krishna, vol. XIII, No. 2, 1996. The review is written by Prof (Mrs) Usha Choudury of Delhi University.
6. The point suggested to me by Dr. M. Kirti Singh from his published paper “Swami Dayananda’s Thought for Today’s World” in a Manipuri Daily, i.e. *Chingtam*, 5/8/75.