CHAPTER X
CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS
Swami ji by his preachings and teachings drives off idol worship from the life, land and soil. It was not in the Vedas. It brought changes in the minds of the Hindus. Most Hindus throw the Idols of Rama and Krishna in the waters of the Ganga and Jamuna. He made Hinduism free from the clutches of superstition and later production associated with Mahavir and the selfish Scholars. The word Pratima found in the Vedas is “measurement in the opinion of Swami Dayananda and not in the sense of idol”.

A scholar of Bengal Devendra Nath Mukhyapadhyaya wrote “………………………….. I have no hesitation in saying that you are not the friend but the foe of India because Idol worship is the root of all evil that was prevalent in India”.

For the purpose of philosophy it is all right. The masses do not acknowledge this stand as this teaching cannot appeal to heart. It is difficult to pronounce a categorical opinion on the complete denial of idol worship. The following observations can be made from the standpoint of a Hindu faith.

(a) Not a crude form of worship:

According to Hindu scripture the idol or the substitute is not God but only a means of making the mind fixed on God. God is the object of worship and he is superimposed on the Pratika or substitute for the time being. After worship by means of 16 ritual acts he is restored at the end to his time and placed in the heart. One’s devotion is made definite by his method.

Here again, I like to emphasis the point that the Idol serves the same purposes to the common people as a flag does to an enemy. A flag focusses man’s martial valour. Hinduism is empathic in laying down that mental worship is superior to image worship. It may be noted that all worship is to the last point, idol worship. Every form with which we invest the formless is an Idol. The primitive man worships a piece stone as a God. The civilised man shuts his eyes and imagines a person with head and arms and calls him God. Both are Idols.
They differ in degree and not in kind. Hinduism has the courage to say so in a democratic and Catholic way. It has also the humanity to allow within its fold even those who cannot rise above grossly concrete forms of God. Mahatma Gandhi observes thus “Idolatry is bad, not so idol worship. An idolator make a fetish of his idol. An idol worshipper Sun God even in a stone and, therefore, take the help of on idol to establish his union with God”.

(2) Close associations with Hindu Arts and aesthetics:

As distinguished from Greek Art, Hindu art is ideal, social and heretic. It is quite different from Greek art which is concerned with wonderful figures of physical beauty.

(a) It is ideal in the sense that it never cares to imitate the objects of the World but it aims at representing ideal figures and form. It denies the maxim that art is an imitation of life. According to Hindu thinking life should be an imitation of art. The Hindu artist whether he is a painter or sculptor represents the ideal world to which the actual world has to transform itself. The artist is concerned with giving a concrete shape to the character that the epic poet has conceived. He is concerned with the great actions of the Gods or the mighty forces of evil that involve the fortunes of the world. His act is not imitative. It is not realistic although we have some fine specimens of naturalistic art of belonging to the early Buddhistic period. But it is not the highest place of Indian Art.

(b) Hindu art is social and not individualistic. The conception of a separate individual self is treated as a lower order of reality and immaturity. The Hindu artist is concerned with the ideal which tradition has handed down and which his community believes in his eccentricities and individual whims are carefully suppressed by himself and employs a symbolism, the key to which is in the possessions of every member of the community. His genius is relative to the ease and adequacy of his expression in his medium the deepest aspiration of the people. His originality lies in the transparency of his art which is classical in the true sense.
(c) It has a close association with religions. It serves a religious purpose. Its symbolism is therefore the symbolism of the scriptures the _Vedas_, the _Upanishads_, the _Puranas_ and the _Gita_.

Swami Dayananda’s philosophy is called the doctrine of Trinity pointing the independent reality of God, soul and matter. This is contained in the _Vedas_ and the _Upanishads_. The only difference is that the _Vedas_ are like a vast ocean, they deal everything in too brief a form whereas the _Upanishads_ deal with one single matter, i.e. knowledge portion and they dilute on this section only.

Sankara goes so far as to say that God alone is the sole truth and everything else is delusion. He is the primal as well as the material cause of the world. Dayananda on the basis of the Vedic hymns admits the existence of two additional realities, i.e. soul and matter.

This is a force in the refutation of Sankarite illusions, the trend of negation of empirical phenomena which are found in Advaita and older idealistic philosophy is reacted strongly in realism and Neo-Hegelians of Europe and America. The same development may be used to strengthen Dayananda’s criticism of mayavada.

His theory of independent reality of the material world has some material implication. Nature is not an illusion. Hence social and political action and material prosperity have worth. His plan and material prosperity have importance. His plan and programme of social reform pave the way for material progress in modern India. It also infused a sense of self confidence among the Hindu People who were under foreign domination. The Hindu people began to assert themselves and have new Vision and nationalism. From the social and political stand-point his theory of dependent matter is what matters most.
God without matter is an artist without his canvas or a Sculpture without moulding the material. Without it the passing of the emergence in to organic living substances remains a mystery. We can neither evolve soul out of matter, nor matter out of soul.

The eternal trinity i.e. God, soul and matter is the basis of all creation. It answers the question - creation by whom, creation for whom and creation from what.

But philoshers are not satisfied with the belief in more entities than one end. The purpose of philosophy is to reduce the strange trinity to unity. The doctrine of three eternals distinguishes the Arya Samaj from Dualism, and monastic Vedanta of Sankara.

Relevance of Swami’s Commentary:

In modern civilisation Sanskrit got separated from the common man. Vedic thought and language were confined to the higher classes of Hindu society. The intelligent section of the people kept the religion of the Vedas in rituals. The tradition of equating Sanskrit learning with Nyaya, Vyakarana and Vedanta minus the Vedas continued for a long time. The Sanskrit studying class of people stored far away from Vedic religion and talked more of Vedanta. Around this time Swami Dayananda came on the scene interpreting the Vedas with a new approach and in an easy language. Before his emergence all commentators and the scholars of vedic thought mixed Vedas with the Puranas, giving importance to the latter. Sayana gave importance to the Puranic thoughts refusing to allow any importance to 95 p.c. of the Vedas. This was because of his advaitic background and philosophy.

Pre-Sayana Vedic commentators like Skanda Swami, Venkata Madhab also followed Sayana imposing puranic thoughts on the Vedas pushing vedic thoughts to the background into a veil. Eminent western scholars like MaxMuller also followed Sayana in his interpretation and commentary of the Vedas.
Scriptural base of Hinduism:

Dayananda hopes that Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Vallabha, etc. have given upanashadic quotations in place of vedic quotations. They are unconscious of the Vedas which are the revelation of the Almighty and enjoy supreme position. Critics hold that it is a narrow conception. Hindu Scholars like D.S. Sharma who observes “.......................... Swami Dayananda has not sufficiently emphasised the importance of the Upanishads, which explain and amplify what is really valuable in the samhita and that he has not recognised the authoritativemess of a scripture like the Gita. Which is the essence of all the Upanishads because he was apparently repelled by the Puranic Pictures of Krishna given in the Vishnu purana and the Bhagavata”. He could have strengthened his hands a thousand fold if he had included the Gita in his common and rightly interpreted its dynamic gospel of action. So congenial to his temper and outlook. (Sarma,D.S. Hinduism Through the ages, Bombay-P 95 )

As for the social ideas it must be said in fairness to him that his socio-religious reformation never exhibited any leaning towards foreign elements. His movement aims at the revival of the vedic outlook without the western ideas. He succeeded in giving free expression to India’s cultural and spiritual heritage.

In his message he launched the movement with the mission that Hinduism is in no way inferior to Christianity. He reassured vedic idealism in the context of modern thought. He rejected outright the idolatry, polytheism, asceticism, the untouchability, Brahmanical superiority, sectarianism and other dark sides of Hinduism. It has to be pointed out earlier that he went ahead of Raja Ram Mohon Roy in some respects.
If we look at him, he is greater than the rest of his contemporaries because his commentary on the *Vedas*, his crusade for the up-liftment of depressed sections in Hindu society, his Gurukula system of education, he attempt to remove the social evils, fight for equal rights of men and women, stoppage of religious conversion etc. make him stand out as a colossus among the makers of modern India.

The study of Swami Dayananda’s works and teaching reveals the far-sightedness in the question of Swaraj and Hindi as the National Language of India. Swamaji longed for the freedom of India. He refused to comply with the request of the Viceroy, Lord Northbrooke to publicize the blessings of British regime in India and to beg of God for the continuance of British domination in India. The idea of self Government originated by him was later worked on by B.G. Tilak and Gandhiji gave the same full fruition in 1947 when India achieved independence.

He was the first to plead for Hindi as the national language of India at the time English language was enough only as fit Indians may become Babus and subordinate officers of the Government. All his books were written in Hindi. When Sanskrit proved un-intelligible to the masees, he switched over to Hindi, thus advocating the Rastrabhasa by Seventy or more years. He always spoke in Hindi, a person who cannot learn Hindi in a few days must be a super-idler, who cannot put in the small effort to learn it. It has been heard in some circles that Swami Dayananda was an intellectual rather than a spiritualist. He lacked the element of Bhakti; the issue can be resolved by saying that he devoted several hours every day to have communion with God. This communion was kept up in his struggles with the world. This is Bhakti in the true sense. His prayers are a language of poetry, breathing forth a spiritual fervor highly inspiring and elevating. These have been the means of infusing a new spirit in many or otherwise drooping spirit? He also contributed to the development of Hindi language and education in general.
His implementation of Shuddhi movement and idea of complete Swaraja gave new vitality and strength to the people of India during the British empire. Through his Arya Samaj he infused a new faith and confidence in the moods of the Indians. He, of course, tries to make Hindi as national language. He carried aloft the torch of vedic culture.

Its contention is that traditional Hinduism must not be driven out as it serves as the source of inspiration and the only means to become light for the Hindus. The typical manifestation of these tendencies are expressed in the Arya Samaj like Ram Rajya Parishad, R.S.S. and Hindu Mahasabha.

The Arya Samajists believe that the Aryan religion is found only in the Veda in its true form. The weakness of Hinduism is to be traced to the non-vedic forms which have, in course of time, accumulated round the Hindu Karma. If the non-vedic elements are taken away the vedic, Aryan religion will assert itself in its purity. It further contends that it has nothing to fear from the modern science. For the Vedas clearly anticipates most of these sciences and technological inventions. This has been discussed in chapter I Section C. It will be unfair to characterise him as a fundamentalist. He was totally above sectarianism or fundamentalism. He regarded the whole of Aryavarta as his home and all human beings as his brethen. He succeeds in defeating the learned pandits with a steady heart. He is a liberating force, ever working towards the elevation of humanity.

He pointed out that the Vedas did not support the disliked institutions such as restrictions on widow re-marriage, child-marriage, sati and caste system. Removal of these malpractice is consistent with the Vedas.

He established his Arya Samaj in 1875 with the objective of reviving the true vedic culture. The Samaj started a social revolution against all evils which are applicable to modern society. Its main achievements consist in the possibilities this society which has opened up to these people who had embraced Christianity and Islam and to return to Hindu Religion. They have to purify the converts and to bring back in Hindu religion.
He has thrown flood of light on all aspects of Hindu religion, Philosophy, Social and Political thought. He laid a firm foundation of modern India, a superstructure of new India. Rationalism is the means to arrive at the final goal of life.

A complete study of modern Indian thought is unthinkable without him. India and Vedic culture are inseparable. Dayananda thoroughly mastered the four Vedas and gave an exposition of the Vedas in a rational and brilliant way. The Vedas inculcated teaching for the peace, perfection in jointly life, happiness of human beings, common good and harmony of the universe. The message of the Vedas have relevance for the contemporary world.

However it is to be observed that the strait adherence to the principles of Arya Samaj is absolutely essential for Dayananda’s teaching. Any laxity in the observance of the beliefs and disbeliefs in condemnable from this stand point.

It is seen that Dayananda’s attitude to Idol worship stands in need of some meditation from the side of common people. But its ethical, social and educational teaching are very strong. It stands for an attitude of life in which all differences of sex, colour and creed fade away; it units all into a common bond of love, harmony, peace and social service. He interpreted the Vedas in a language people understood. Before him the Vedas were mixed with Puranic thoughts with an emphasis on the latter. As pointed earlier other commentator pushed Vedic thoughts in the background into a veil. The idea of knowing Vedic philosophy and culture through translation was originated by Dayananda. The teachings of Dayananda is faithfully practised, will go a long way in establishing a new era of peace among the mankind.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Devendranath Babu is a celebrated writer of Bengal who wrote in impartial language as quoted from introduction to life of Maharishi Dayananda in Hindi. Also Dayananda the great, 1972, p 10. Also Gandhiji in his writing “Idolatry and Idol worship” remarked thus “we, the human family are not all philosophers. We are of the earth, very earthy, and we are not satisfied with contemplating the Invisible God”. Vide Gandhiji’s speeches written by N.K. Bose.

2. Vide supra chapter I section B. I establish this theory in the body of the thesis. The passages in his Satyarth Prakash, however do not support my vision.

3. Vide supra chapter II section B.


7. My observation. Also supported by the followers of Arya Samaj.

8. Supra chapter I Section A. Robert D. Baird, Religion in Modern India, New Delhi, 1901, pp 40-42.

9. The point is developed in proper place of the thesis.

10. My observation.