

A GREAT ARYAN MOVEMENT.

BY BHAI PARMANAND.

IN this age the Aryan race has played a very prominent part in the history of humanity. The Aryan races of the west are now leaders in science and material power. Before these West-Aryans began their march of progress, their elder brethren, the East-Aryans, had displayed their powers of development in several branches of human activity. They excelled chiefly in religion, i. e., the sentiment that guides man in the conduct of life.

It has now become a well-established fact that the East-Aryans have exercised an immense influence on the religious growth of mankind. Hinduism and Buddhism are distinctly of Aryan origin. The Zoroastrian religion which is a link connecting Aryan with Semitic thought, is also Aryan and bears the greatest resemblance to Hinduism in its beliefs and customs. The style of the Zend-Avesta is similar to that of the Veda and even the word *Zend* is supposed to have been derived from *Chhand*, the Sanskrit word for the Verses of the Veda. Dogmatic Judaism was largely based upon the Zoroastrian religion and Christianity in addition to that, borrowed much from Buddhism.

Hinduism, in its ancient form Vedism, is the oldest of these systems. Moreover, it has come into closest touch with the other systems and has survived them all. Buddhism was its own child, and when Buddhism in its vigor turned to extirpate it, a conflict ensued in India which lasted for nearly a thousand years. The struggle is marked by the complete absence of those incidents that startle and frighten the human mind in the history of Semitic religions.

No sooner was the struggle over, than Hinduism, very much exhausted, was called upon to defend itself against the attacks of Mohammedanism. This proselyting form of Judaism rose like a storm from Arabia and spread both east and west. Soon it swept over

the whole of Northern Africa and Spain; and was advancing rapidly when it met the assembled forces of Christianity on the field of Paris. Fortunately for Christianity a division had broken out in the Mohammedan camp and the Christian army was victorious. It was a critical time for Christianity. Had Charles Martel been defeated, says Gibbons, "the Mohammedan *mullas* (priests) would have been lecturing on the commentaries of Quran to circumcised audiences in the colleges of Oxford to-day." After destroying Zoroastrianism in Persia, this storm dashed itself for 800 years against Hinduism, the patient heroism of whose martyrs in the course of centuries blunted the edge of the Moslem sword. This war was hardly ended when there appeared another formidable foe on the scene. Christianity came to India supported by material influence and the power of wealth, and it has been in operation there for the last three hundred years.

It was in the fitness of things that a great saviour should arise in a country rich in such traditions. Prophets and saviours always arise among downtrodden and crushed peoples, because the condition of the people requires a message of mercy and love. These saviours are incarnations of love and mercy and are therefore believed to be divine. The year 1824 will remain important in the nineteenth century history of India, as in that year such a prophet was born in a humble Brahman family in a Hindu state of Western India.

Nothing supernatural or unnatural is said to have happened at the birth of Swami Dayanand, as that was not necessary for the mission of his life. While still a boy of thirteen his conscience was roused by an ordinary incident. It is a Hindu custom to keep vigil on a certain night during the year and dedicate it to the worship of the god Siva. Dayanand's parents went to sleep after remaining awake for some time, when he observed that some rats came out of a corner and ran over the image of the god. Strong doubts with regard to the current beliefs of his people arose in his mind. Even at that young age, he had studied the scriptures carefully, but henceforth he began to read them from a new standpoint. He constantly thought of religion and differences in religion. He saw himself confronted with the great problem, why there were so many religions and why there were so many sects in each religion.

Eight more years thus passed away. He was twenty-one when two deaths occurred in his own family, those of his uncle and his sister. The youth stood face to face with death. The sight of death gives rise to serious thoughts in every one of us, but they seldom

leave a lasting impression. In Swami Dayanand's case this experience was the turning point of his life. It gave the second great impulse to his youthful mind and was the cause of his renunciation. He stole away from his home, though his parents succeeded in catching him and at once made preparations for his marriage in order to bind him to the world. Again he fled, but not to be brought back this time. Then followed the period of asceticism. Years were spent in jungles and mountains in solitary meditation or in the company of great ascetics. That was the path of individual perfection. Had he been contented like the rest of his type with self-realization alone, he would not have cared to come again into the world of struggle and strife. But Swami Dayanand had determined upon another course. He could not be satisfied with his individual salvation, when the rest of mankind was sunk in ignorance and darkness. He must find some remedy for the evil. Finally he met a blind old sage, Virganand, who impressed upon his mind the importance of the Veda. That was the key to the solution of his doubts and difficulties. That was the light he received from his teacher and he made up his mind to spread it.

Truth is one. How can we know truth from falsehood? Our last appeal is to reason. But reason alone can not be a safe guide. It is so much clouded by the mists of prejudice that it leads people differently brought up to different conclusions. We can not therefore rely wholly upon reason. Dayanand's solution is quite new. He deals with the question historically and applies to it the comparative method. Treating the subject of religion by this method, we come to know how various forms and formularies have been added to religion and how they have changed, distorted and disfigured it; until now religion has become a fetter for men who are as helpless in their ignorance as the bull that has wound its tether-rope round the tree and stands tied and chained to it. Dayanand's return to the Veda is like the turning of the bull's face backwards which is sure to restore him to his complete original freedom. Swami Dayanand asserts this principle in the words of the philosopher Schopenhauer, that "the wisdom of the Aryan seers can not be pushed aside by the events of Galilee; on the other hand the primitive wisdom of mankind will flow back on Europe and create a change in our knowing and thinking."

His position in Hinduism is that of a reformer like the great Buddha. He saw that many evil customs and creeds had crept into modern Hinduism from which it required to be purified and restored to its pure Vedic form. With regard to other great religions, he

thought that if properly interpreted the teachings of all of them could be traced to the Veda. He began to preach his idea. He met with severe opposition, not only from the Christian and Mohammedan priests, but from the Hindu pandits as well. His only support was his character and learning. He had many public discussions with the representatives of all religions. He was undoubtedly the most learned man of his age. In a big gathering at Benares, the center of Hindu learning, where he stood in the midst of a large number of his adversaries, the chairman of the meeting compared his position to that of a lion in the forest.

One or two incidents of his life will show the magnanimity and boldness of Swami Dayanand's character. Once when he was preaching a man brought him a betel-leaf to chew. He soon spit it out, and it was found to contain poison. The man was arrested but Swami Dayanand begged for his release on the ground—as he expressed it—that his mission was to free human beings and not to send them to prison.

On another occasion, he was staying in a garden in the capital of a large Rajput state. When the ruler came to pay him his respects, he was accompanied by his mistress. Swami Dayanand's first words were to preach to him on the duties of kings, pointing out that the ruler should not have exhibited himself in the way he had done. The ruler was all-powerful and the rebuke might even have cost Swami Dayanand his life. The mistress became one of his enemies and is said to have been instrumental in attempts to poison him.

The active work of Swami Dayanand extended over a decade, the greater part of which was spent in Rajputawa, in the oldest and most important Hindu states. He seemed to believe that as long as certain Hindu states (particularly Rajputs) did not experience some awakening, real life could not be restored to Hinduism and that it alone could be the right instrument for a general revival of Vedism.

He spent a very short time in Northern India during which period he founded a great movement called the "Arya Samaj." The extraordinary feature that distinguishes him from all other teachers, is that he altogether excluded his personality from his teachings. He begins his works by stating that the reader is at perfect liberty to reject what he sees that is wrong, and to accept only what appears to him to be right. This peculiar feature of Swami Dayanand was clearly shown when he was laying the foundations of the Arya Samaj in 1876. In spite of urgent and repeated requests of the

members, he definitely declined to be named patron, guru (teacher) or even president of the society. He joined as a simple member like the others and continued in that relation till the end of his life.

In the course of one generation the Arya Samaj has displayed remarkable activity. It has spread over all parts of India and counts hundreds of thousands among its members. It would not be wrong to say that the Arya Samaj is the only living organization in the whole of India. Swami Dayanand did not live long to work for the movement. He died at Ajmere in November, 1883, of chronic poisoning.

His death was sublime; he remained perfectly calm and undisturbed till his last breath. As a memorial to Swami Dayanand the Arya Samaj erected a college in Lahore, called the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, which at present is the largest educational institution in Northern India. Its funded capital has grown to more than a million of rupees, mostly subscribed by the poor and middle classes. Its principal, L. Hans Raj retired only last January after doing a self-denying and devoted service during the best twenty-five years of his life. He lived a life of poverty and although he had a fairly large family worked all these years without remuneration. A number of his pupils have followed his example. Giving up their material prospects, they have joined the college and are working as professors there on a bare maintenance.

The Arya Samaj supports another unique institution, known as the Guru Kula Academy, at Haridwar. It follows strictly the ancient Aryan system of education. It is superintended and managed by another equally devoted and self-sacrificing great leader of men, L. Munshi Ram, and is also manned by a similar band of professors. It is one of the most remarkable institutions in the world and has elicited the admiration of all who have visited it. Many other high schools (for boys and girls) and branches of Guru Kula are carried on by the Arya Samaj.

The philanthropic work of the Arya Samaj is no less noteworthy. During the frequent famines and other similar calamities in the country, the greatest amount of relief from any public body has come from the Arya Samaj. The leader in this line of Samaj work is L. Lajpat Rai, who is better known on account of his recent deportation by the government of India. The only great college for the education of girls in Northern India, is managed by another great worker, L. Deva Raj. All of these men take their inspiration from Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj which is the source of light and life to the people.

What Swami Dayanand aimed at in founding this movement, can be best understood by turning our attention to the following few extracts from the preface of his work which has been translated into English under the title *Light of Truth*.

He says: "It is a well-known fact that 5000 years ago there existed no other religion in the whole world but the Vedic."

This is the basic principle from which he takes his start. The statement is rather startling to one who is not familiar with the working of historical forces in the early ages. On the discovery of Sanskrit the western people thought that the language was a mere forgery. Soon, however, the time came when Sanskrit came to be regarded as the mother of the Aryan stock of languages. At any rate the discovery brought a great many facts to light with regard to the early divisions of humanity and created the science of comparative philology.

Similarly, the allied science of comparative theology has thrown new light on the subject of religion. It is demonstrating to-day that what we call different religions are mere perversions or exaggerations of one and the same religion; and also that all religions are derived from one another. We are told by those who have made a study of the different religions, that the various religious doctrines and theories of cosmogony, of evil, of redemption and of resurrection, etc., are nothing more than distortions of simple primitive ideas. Let the horizon before humanity extend and we shall see things that we could never imagine. On this subject, the testimony of Prof. Max Müller, perhaps the greatest authority on these matters, is of great interest. "I have often pointed out," he says in his *Lectures on Vedanta*, "that the real importance, nay the unique character of the Veda will always be, not so much its purely chronological antiquity, great though it may be, as the opportunity which it affords us of watching the active process of fermentation of early thought. We see in the Vedic hymns the first revelation of Deity, the first expressions of surprise and suspicion, the first discovery that behind this visible and perishable world there must be something invisible, eternal or divine. No one who has read the hymns of the Rigveda, can doubt any longer *as to what was the origin of the earliest Aryan religion and mythology*. Nearly all the leading deities of the Veda bear the unmistakable traces of their physical character. Their very names tell us that they were in the beginning names of the great phenomena of nature, of fire, rain and storm; of sun and moon, of heaven and earth. Afterwards we see how these so-called deities and heroes became the centers of mythological tra-

ditions, wherever the Aryan speakers settled, whether in Asia or in Europe."

"This is the result," he goes on, "gained once for all and this light has shed its rays far beyond the Vedic mythology and religion and lightened up the darkest corner in the history of the mythological and religious thoughts of the other Aryan nations, nay, of the nations unconnected by their language with the speakers of the Aryan speech."

It is argued on the other side, that it may be true that the Veda contains the primitive ideas of the Aryans, but religion has been undergoing a process of evolution, and in the course of centuries of development, pure Christian theism has evolved out of vulgar polytheism. Yes, evolution there has been, but only to find at last that in the search for absolute metaphysical truth religion simply blundered and ended in confusion worse confounded. As regards pure theism, it is a question whether the Semitic conception of God as the creator and governor of the universe, who, paying little heed to the rest of infinite creation, interferes so often in the affairs of the Semitic people and treats them as his personal concern, can any longer stand the scrutiny of modern science.

Do we then mean to go back to paganism? The word is no sooner spoken, than all the evil associations in our mind are aroused in connection with it. Such is the force of habit. A moment's serious consideration however will show that Christianity as a system of religion was in no way an advance upon paganism. The facts of history are very stubborn and they utterly disprove all such Christian assertions. In the first place, under the pagan world there was perfect tolerance and freedom of opinion. Christianity brought in its train intolerance, wars, persecutions, and the Inquisition. Again, science and philosophy flourished in pagan times; whereas while the Christian church was supreme in Europe, science and philosophy were suppressed. But it is said that Christianity civilized the semi-barbarous nations of Europe. The fact is that pagan Rome was politically the mistress of Europe and was casting abroad the seeds of her civilization. When Rome became Christian, she again took up her old work of civilizing Europe, but this time through Christianity and holding the nations in complete intellectual subjection.

It was the old pagan spirit and love of nature that broke the spell of Christianity. Modern civilization dates from the period of the Renaissance which was a movement of pagan revival; and it spread because the intellect of Europe could no longer be kept to

the yoke of the church. The revival of pagan learning led to a general intellectual awakening in Europe, which resulted in the great movements of the Reformation and the Revolution. It is the same spirit of inquiry that has undermined Christian theories and is gradually taking the world back to paganism. This will correct the great historical error which is committed in the acceptance of the genealogy of the clan of the Jews by the great Aryan nations of Europe for their lineage. Paganism was simply another and a modified form of the Aryan social system and is no doubt a natural condition of human society. Among primitive races mythology was their peculiar mode of giving expression to their ideas. It was to them what poetry is to us.

Again Swami Dayanand says: "The turning away from the pursuit of the study of the Veda led to the spread of ignorance and intellectual darkness all over the world. The understanding of men having become clouded, they founded religions just as they thought fit."

Veda comes from the root *vid* which is the same as wit, meaning to know. Veda thus means knowledge. Knowledge can be expressed by means of words alone. Words are the body of knowledge without which it is impossible to conceive of its existence. According to Swami Dayanand the knowledge and the word are both without beginning and end.

The Aryans spread far and wide. As there were no written books of the Veda, the time came when they forgot all about this possession of their race. The Hindu Aryans alone preserved the Veda in the shape of four books. Until late in human history nations learned a great deal from one another, and whatever was learned, was properly assimilated. Wherever the Aryans went they spread their civilization and Aryanized other races.

Religion then existed in its pure form free from alloy. It had an entirely different significance. It could not be thought of as having any originator or founder, just as we can not think of an originator of truth, love or charity. Zoroaster, like Confucius, was a great moral teacher and benefactor of his race. Moses was a deliverer of his tribe. No doubt the Jewish prophets entertained a belief that their tribe were the chosen people of God; they never thought of extending their beliefs or customs to other peoples. They seem to be rather jealous lest others share their special boons with them. The annals of their tribe were their scriptures. Yahveh was their tribal God and Judaism was a tribal religion similar to many others existing at that period in Greece and other countries.

Critical study shows that even Jesus Christ was originally actuated by other motives than religious, to set himself up as a saviour. As a Jew he saw the misery of his tribe under Roman slavery and wanted to liberate them from this foreign yoke. The charge brought against him at his trial was of a seditious nature.

What distinguishes the present religion from its old prototype is its peculiar feature of proselytism implying the need of converting other people. With this characteristic, religion appears in an altogether new garb. Henceforward some person's name is added before it; and it is not religion but this or that person's religion. It assumed a new form every time a new founder arose.

The growth of this step which changed the nature of religion, took place in India. In the Vedic age, great stress was laid on the performance of duties prescribed for various stages of life and for various kinds of professions. In that age laws and social and political institutions developed in India. During the next age, that is, the age of the Upanishads, worldly functions fall into contempt and the discussion of metaphysical theories is considered of prime importance for man's life. All intellectual effort is turned in this direction. Absolute truth was the only means of salvation, and that must be found. We can not expect the early people to have realized what is hard even for most of us at the present time, namely that there is no such thing as absolute truth, and that on the contrary truth progresses along with the growth of human intellect and knowledge. In the philosophic age we find that certain definite metaphysical theories have developed and they are not only taught as systems of philosophy but are preached to the people by wandering teachers as the right way to salvation.

There was so much talk about them and so much valuable time was wasted in the discussion of these theories, that Buddha's mind revolted from them and in opposition to them all he set up his theory of purely ethical religion. His preaching met with wonderful success. His mission spread beyond India to distant parts of the earth. Hundreds and thousands of Buddhistic missionaries went abroad to teach virtue and piety in the name of Buddha.

If proselytism can be justified, it was most justifiable in the case of these missionaries. Their motive was simply to elevate others in piety and virtue by the example of their own renunciation and sacrifice. But a new seed was sown and propagandism came into prominence as the chief feature of religion, no matter whether right or wrong.

St. Paul and other preachers of Christianity copied the Buddhist method. They went to proselyte people to Jewish traditions. With Christianity conversion became a point of the utmost importance. As the people who accepted Christianity in Europe were warlike in their habits, they did not proselytize by means of love and persuasion alone, as the missionaries of Buddhism had done, but made use of physical force when needed to gain their end.

Mohammed as well as his adherents depended greatly on force as a means of conversion. He saw that the sword was the quickest agent of propagandism. His chief work was to unite the divided tribes of Arabia, and as soon as he gained the military strength, his armies carried the flag of his religion both east and west.

Hence we find in the present day that conversion to a new faith does not signify any change in the life of the convert, but simply a change of opinion or belief, particularly in some theory concerning the founder of that faith. If this were not so, millions of money would not have been wasted by America on proselytizing missions to countries like India and China. The conversion of a Hindu to Christianity does not at all mean any change in his life for the better, as he already possesses such virtues as charity, humility, or poverty, most valuable in the eyes of the founder of Christianity. While under the pretense of securing heaven, he is simply taught to imitate western modes of life, and in doing so he generally picks up the evil side of it and at the same time is deprived of his original stock of virtues. The very nature of the temptations placed before him for his conversion, is enough to lower him both spiritually and morally. Thus it is that religion shifted from its original purity to an absolutely wrong basis. The guiding spirits of humanity instead of being great moral and religious teachers and transmitters of truth, became originators of new religion. Thus was sown the seed of division among mankind, and religion instead of being a force for uniting us all in the bonds of love and fellow feeling has been abused to create unending dissensions.

Again: "Unbiased learned men knew very well how many undesirable results have accrued and are likely to accrue in this world from the mutual wrangling of schismatics and sectaries. There will be no good will and love among men till this wrangling ceases."

This remark does not need much comment. The pages of history are full of illustrations. Every student of history is familiar with the burning of heretics and later on the persecutions of Protestants by the Catholics and of the Catholics by the Protestants in England and France. It is unnecessary to go into the horrors of

the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Day and other similar incidents.

The fall of Spain can be ascribed a great deal to the spirit of intolerance. It carried fire and sword into the Netherlands, killed thousands of its sons under the Inquisition, and drove the most industrious population out of the land. Philip III of Spain was once personally looking over the people being sent to the stake when his attention was attracted by a young noble who appealed to the royal mercy. "I would not spare you even if you were my son," was the stern reply.

The Thirty Years' War, which destroyed Germany is another instance. One small incident will show enough of the ferocity with which it raged over the people. Magdeburg was one of the most prosperous towns. It had a population of about 90,000 inhabitants. It was captured by the Catholic army after three days' siege and was set on fire. For several days the stream was flowing red with blood. A soldier wrote in an exulting tone to his lady love that suckling babes were speared through by the soldiers. Nothing was left of the town but a heap of ashes. The story of the crusades is another chapter in the history of religions. The Mohammedans, shortly after the death of the Prophet, were divided among themselves and were cutting each others' throats. The cold-blooded murder of the children of the one party by the other is still commemorated in the greatest Mohammedan festival.

Surely all this is not in accordance with the teaching of Christianity or of any religion. Christ taught to "love thine enemy"! Why then all this murder and bloodshed in the name of his church?

There can only be one answer, and that is as true in the case of all religions as in Christianity. The blame can only be laid at the door of those who are supposed to have charge of men's souls, who have made a profession out of religion. The priestly class in every religion has always kept the flame of fanaticism burning in human breasts and has sown the seed of hatred and prejudice against others. It is in their interest to do so. The respect they receive at people's hands and the command they possess over their minds is dependent upon the amount of that prejudice they infuse in them. The preachers of religions are like dealers in commodities, each advertising the beauty and qualities of his articles and in competition trying to bring others in ill-repute. Thus a trade has been started in religion which has given rise to jealousy, hatred, prejudice and their dreadful consequences.

If we could in any way measure or estimate the whole amount of hatred existing in the world, the greatest amount would on anal-

ysis be found to have been caused by differences in creeds. Imagine how much energy is lost in the efforts of Christianity to convert other people; and within Christianity itself what an amount is wasted in the efforts of the followers of one sect to convert the followers of other sects. The same can be said of other religions too.

The most abominable thing to my mind is the sight of a person starting a new religion. It simply aggravates the disease to which humanity has been a victim for so many centuries. It adds another pest to the already numerous epidemics that are working havoc in humanity. Every new religion starts to become universal with the high ideal of the brotherhood of man; and with professions of having come quite fresh from the factory of nature or of God (as if God had nothing else to do but to send his messages to men, excluding women from his favors, and simultaneously of different style to different persons). But we know that every creed in its essential nature is exclusive and though it might appear innocent or attractive for some time, it is ultimately sure to go the same way as its predecessors. Seeing the chances of success very remote, it soon gets tired of its professed ideals and begins to make use of unfair and worldly means to entrap people and whenever it gets opportunity and power, tries to spread by force. If we could somehow remove these differences in religion, we would cut at the root of the greatest source of hatred and evil among mankind.

Again says Swami Dayanand: "Every point on which these thousand religions are unanimous, is the religion of the Veda and is to be accepted. That on which they contradict each other, is artificial, false, contrary to religion and is to be discarded."

It is remarkable that every one of us feels so sanguine of the absolute truth of the religious views he holds. We forget another fact, that in most cases our religion has nothing to do with truth or falsehood, but is simply a result of the accident of our birth. The Christians of to-day profess Christianity and do so much for its extension, not because they have ascertained after careful inquiry that Christianity is the only true religion, but simply because they are born Christians. The next important factor that determines our religion for us is the force of early training and of social environment. The first impressions, however wrong or absurd they may be, stick to the mind and are hard to erase. They become *our* views which we cherish and love. It is on this account that we acquire a prejudice against all other views; and our condition resembles that of the frog who having always lived in a small pond

could not imagine that the ocean was something larger than the pond.

The plea that our remote ancestors made a proper choice of the religion which we hold, is not very sound. History tells us that conversions to other religions have been made by the sword or by undue political or social influences. Circumstances of marriage for instance have frequently brought about the conversion. We notice at the present day that generally low motives attract people to new religions. Schools and hospitals are used as traps for catching new members. If the truth or falsity of a religion were the motive for conversion, we should naturally expect the intellectual and thinking men, and not the poor and ignorant classes, to take the lead in the acceptance of a new faith.

It is a matter of common observation that if a thousand persons speak the truth they will say the same thing, while a thousand persons telling lies will give as many different versions of the story. The existence of a thousand and more forms of religion indicates clearly that each one has become mixed with a certain amount of falsehood. Whether that falsehood comes from the time of the originator or was added by the later propagators is immaterial. It was therefore the most vital problem in religion that presented itself to Swami Dayanand in his boyhood, namely, how to find out truth from falsehood in religion, in other words how to separate the grain from the chaff.

It is a hard thing to do, but if we could free our minds from all our early prejudices, we would easily find an answer to it. We should start in the spirit of a true inquirer with a perfectly clear and unbiased mind. Swami Dayanand has illustrated the answer by the help of the following parable, which explains the situation to every one's satisfaction.

A man with a blank mind set out to find out what was right and what was wrong. He visited the ministers of various religions, each of whom told him that his own religion was superior to all the rest. He was very much perplexed and did not know how to decide among so many claimants till at last he met a wise man who showed him the way, whereupon he called an assembly of the representatives of all the religions, sects and creeds. Questions were put to them one by one whether or not their religion taught to be good, kind and loving, to be honest and truthful and so on. All replied in the affirmative. Wherein lay the differences? was finally asked. Each one now put forward some peculiar theory of God and his mysterious messages, which to say the least, were beyond all human comprehen-

sion. The inquirer too could not understand why God should go out of his way to send so many messages which served no other purpose than to create dissensions among his people, and consequently he came to the decision that all those points on which all the religions (nearly a thousand in number) are agreed, constitute the right religion, while those on which they contradict each other are artificial and false.

Practical law of conduct is the only right religion, as it is on this part alone that all religions agree. "There is no religion," says Prof. Max Müller, "(or if there is any, I do not know of it) which does not say, 'Do good, avoid evil.'"

What about the dogmas then? We have already pointed out that all religions are derived from one another. Just as various divisions of the Christian religion have grown out of Christianity, various divisions of religions have grown out of religion. The doctrines of Mohammedanism are all borrowed from Judaism and Jewish beliefs are commonly Semitic versions of the Parsee theories. Christianity engrafted the Jewish dogmas on the beliefs of Mithraism which having traveled over from Persia had become the prevailing cult in Greece and Rome. Mithra was originally the Vedic God Mitra. Most of these theories, therefore, when traced back to their origin, become more clear and intelligible than they are in their present form. The sacrifice of animals was originally the killing of one's own animal self. Ignorance personified became the power of darkness with the Parsees, which was changed into Satan in the Old Testament. The true view of the dogmas, however, is that they are mere problems of philosophy. They develop, grow or change as the human intellect advances. Human intellect is finite and it can never be said to have reached the absolute truth. The progress of science and the knowledge of spiritual laws are constantly shedding new light on all metaphysical questions. It is therefore utterly wrong and even absurd to bind the human intellect by the intervention of supernatural forces.

But these maxims of morality are enforced by ordinary law, and it may be asked, "What is the need of religion?" The difference between the two is that religion places the ideal virtue before mankind and urges them to act up to that ideal, while the law only goes so far as it can force human nature to act upon those virtues. That is the ideal which the Vedic *dharma* holds up before men. It is not religion. It is *dharma*, which means law, duty, and right conduct.

· Agan: "It is certain that the mutual dissensions among learned

men have been the cause of mutual hatred, discord and strife among the masses. If all these men were not immersed in selfishness but wished to further the interests of all, it is very likely that all mankind would have one common religion."

What we want is to find out unity under all this diversity.

In order to know what man is, we can not look to the garb in which one particular individual is dressed. We can not even consider the outward appearance and description of the organs of the body, because the appearances and descriptions are sure to vary a great deal. We can simply say that man is a being who is conscious of his existence and has the power to think (Sanskrit *manas* = to think). Similarly in religion we want religion, not so many religions; we want gold and not the numerous articles which are manufactured out of it often with an amount of alloy. They are valuable because they are made of gold. We can achieve this end by the method of generalization; by sacrificing the non-essentials for the sake of the essentials, and by giving up what is artificial for preserving that which is real. We get at the right religion by cutting off the redundant and in many cases injurious branches of the tree. That will lead us to the trunk upon which these branches stand and which they hide from our view.

The ministers of various religions and creeds are the representatives of the founders of their churches. They share the responsibility of creating numerous divisions in religions. They understand full well that these divisions are based upon the personalities of these founders. All the religious quarrels could be ended by eliminating the personalities from religion. Religion has passed the stage of personal government. Democracy in religion is required in order to bring peace and harmony in the world. That is the message which Swami Dayanand brings to us. For the success of that mission he founded the movement called the Arya Samaj. It is not a new religion, neither a new faith nor creed. It is a society that works to bring man around to the original purity of religion and tries to deliver the human intellect from superstitious ideas about it. Swami Dayanand formulated the standard of the original religion into ten great principles which form the basis of Arya Samaj. Seven among these are the commonly accepted maxims of morality. They are, knowledge, truthfulness, honesty, love, duty, liberty, and self-denial. Among the remaining three, the first one says that all true knowledge and things known by that knowledge originate from one supreme power; the second, that that power which is all knowledge, all goodness, all bliss, etc., is the Ideal

towards which we should try to draw ourselves. The third says that the Vedas are the books of true knowledge and should be studied by every Arya.

The first two of course place the ideal of perfection and goodness before man and this is the only chief function of religion. As to the Veda, in a general way it means a book of true knowledge. According to the traditions of the Aryan race, this knowledge is stored up in the form of the four books which are admittedly the oldest books of mankind; and their study by the western scholars has already been attended with many important consequences. Their study, moreover, will surely convince every reader of one thing, that in the domain of spirituality and morality not a single new teaching has been given by any of the so-called great teachers and no new truth has been brought to light by the so-called revelations from God.