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On 10 April the establishment of the Arya Samaj is celebrated the world over. In South Africa three organisations, the pillars of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, were established during the month of April.

The Veda Dharma Sabha Pietermaritzburg, the oldest Arya Samaj in South Africa, was formed on the 10 April 1909. The Arya Yuvak Sabha in Durban was formed three years later, on the 19 April 1912. The Yuvak Arya Samaj based in Clairwood was formed on the 3 April 1932. As we move towards the 150th celebrations of the Arya Samaj in 2025 we call on all to strengthen the resolve to promote the Vedas and implement the principles of the Arya Samaj.

Our feature article to mark the founding of the Arya Samaj is on Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi authored by Karuna Mohan. We pay tribute to our South African born first Swami who epitomised the sixth principle of the Arya Samaj: to do good to the world, to promote physical, spiritual, and social good. In the programme towards the 200th Birth Anniversary of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati in 2024, our second article is on "Celebrating the Founding of the Arya Samaj" by Pt D Raghubir.

One of the key programmes initiated by ardent followers of the Arya Samaj South Africa is the Arya Benevolent Home. Our third article is a Keynote Address delivered to the Commemoration of the Arrival of Indians in South Africa organised by the Arya Benevolent Home in November 2022 by Narendh Ganesh.

Lastly, we have an article in our series "How the Arya Samaj Shaped my Life" by Oosha Devi Chirkoot-Lalla.

Your contributions and comments are welcomed. Please see the last page for the criteria for articles.

Veda Jyoti Editorial Committee:

Arthi Shanand, Karuna Mohan, Kirun Satgoor, Ressa Rambaros, Shobana Singh, Sudhira Sham, Usha Debipersad.



ओम् नमः शम्भवाय च मयोभवाय च नमः शङ्कराय च
मयस्कराय च नमः शिवाय च शिवतराय च ॥

Aum namaḥ śambhavāya ca mayobhavāya ca namaḥ
śaṅkarāya ca mayaskarāya ca namaḥ śivāya ca śivatarāya
ca. Yajur Veda 16.41

This mantra is a salutation to Paramatma. We offer our salutations to God the Abode of serenity (*shambhu*) and the Embodiment of Bliss (*mayobhavaya*) and we offer our salutations to God, the peace Giver (*shankaraya*) and the happiness Giver (*mayaskaraya*) and we offer our salutations to God, the Store of goodness (*shivaya*) and our Benefactor (*shivataraya*). We surrender ourselves to that God.

What does this mantra have in common with the names associated to Lord Shiva? He is also called *Shambhu*, *Shankar*, *Shiva*. The mantra above explains the meaning of the names given to Shiva which are attributes of the One and Only Paramatma and He is therefore called by so many names.

Swami Dayanand was determined to find out the truth about God, after he was disillusioned by what he

witnessed at the night-long vigil that he observed with his family on the night of Shivaratri.

He left home in search of the Truth and after many years spent with his Guru Virjanand, Swamiji, on being initiated, went out to preach the Truth about God to the world as was explained in the Vedas.

Whether we sit and pray or imbibe the gems of the Vedas, we need to ask ourselves, “what are the lessons that we have learnt from these practices? Are we implementing these lessons in our lives today? “

How often do we stand and make ourselves heard whenever injustices prevail? Do we practice altruism and what exactly is our role in this universe? How much are we doing to preserve this beautiful planet that we live on?

Pt Arthi Nanackchand Shanand



Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi: An Outstanding Leader from South Africa

We pay tribute to Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi, the first president of the Arya Samaj South Africa and leader of the Natal Indian Congress - a self-made person endowed with exceptional talents in writing and speaking. A freedom fighter, a leader, an organiser, a religious preacher and an intellectual.



Bhawani Dayal was born on the 10 September 1892 in Johannesburg of freed indentured parents. He grew up in the overcrowded location set aside for Indians in Johannesburg which lacked basic sanitation. When the plague broke out his family moved to a detention camp in Klipspruit Farm.

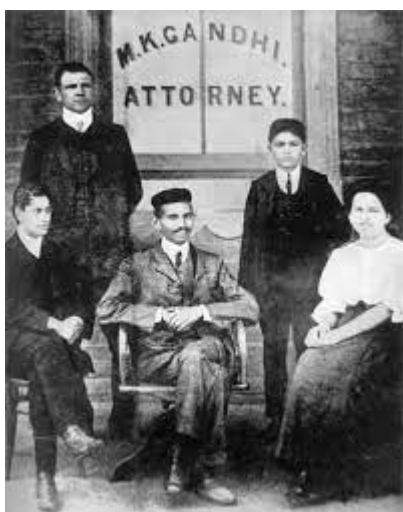
He received his early education at the St. Cryprain and Wesleyan Methodist School where he learnt English and was sent to a private school conducted by Pandit Atmaram Narshiram Vyas to be instructed in Hindi.

To escape the Anglo Boer War the family moved to Durban. In 1902 after the war ended the family returned to Johannesburg but were ejected like numerous other Indian families that returned after the war. His father then decided to move the family to his hometown in the state of Bihar, India.

For a South African boy who encountered India, he found the poverty overwhelming. Whist in India, in his youth, Dayal become interested in Swami Dayanand and began to read his writings.

"The day I started reading the Satyarth Prakash (Light of Truth), that day I forgot to eat, drink or sleep. My soul was restless with the pangs of spiritual hunger and now that delicious and healthy food was at hand. From the lessons of the book the door of my inner-eye was opened. The flame of new life blazed in front of me." ¹

He contacted Swami Shraddhanand, a prominent Arya Samaj leader, freedom fighter, and the founder of the famous Gurukul Kangari University, to request membership to the Arya Samaj. He established the first Arya Samaj in his village and became its President. Dayal began travelling to surrounding villages urging people to boycott British goods as part of the Indian Independence movement.



In 1912 the Dayal family returned to South Africa. Upon arrival they faced difficulty with the Immigration Act. They were assisted by Gandhi and Polak who represented them at the Supreme Court and won the case. After the dispute was settled Dayal moved to Transvaal (Gauteng) and lived in Germiston where he worked at a laundry, first ironing clothes and later served as a bookkeeper.

In 1913 when the Indian Young Men's Association was formed in the Transvaal with the intention of promoting social and political awareness as well as the study of literacy works and Indian culture, Dayal was elected as its first President. Later that year Dayal resigned from his job and he and his wife Jagrani, joined Gandhi's Satyagrah campaign.

On the 16 October 1913 they arrived at Newcastle and helped to organise a strike which resulted in their imprisonment with hard labour. The Dayal's spent three months in prison before being released in January the

next year. Dayal's wife was imprisoned with her son who was taken care of by mother Kasturba Gandhi. After their release they were invited to stay in Phoenix at Gandhi's Ashram where Dayal began editing the Hindi section of the Indian Opinion, a newspaper.



After Gandhi's departure from South Africa, Dayal returned to Germiston and began working at the Rose Deep Gold Mine, during which time he wrote his first book "The History of the Satyagraha in South Africa" which was published in India. In Germiston, Dayal formed a Hindi Pracharini Sabha, Hindi Night School and Hindi Football club to promote Hindi language and culture.

Despite financial difficulty the night school was open to children free of charge. In this venture Dayal was assisted by his wife and brother. He travelled throughout the Transvaal and thereafter to Durban to preach the Vedic religion and propagate the importance of Hindi education. He set up Hindi Pracharini Sabhas and Hindi schools in Verulam, Charlestown, Newcastle, Glencoe, Ladysmith and Durban. In Clare estate he set up a Hindi Ashram, with a Hindi school, and donated his collection of books to establish a library. Due to the publicity gained by the Ashram he was able, in 1916 to set up the first Hindi literacy conference in Ladysmith which was followed by the second conference in Pietermaritzburg in 1917.

"Truly speaking I came back to South Africa to make money and to live a comfortable and luxurious life but after meeting Babu (Mahatma Gandhi) and being in his company the image of my life changed. It gave birth to such a divine revelation in me that once I had freed myself from financial obligations, I pledged to devote myself to the service of the Indian people."²

In 1916 a Hindi weekly "Dharma Veer" was being published in Durban. Its proprietor was Shri Rallaram Gandhilamal Bhalla, a member of the Arya Samaj. He started this weekly in memory of the martyr Pandit

¹ Autobiography of Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi, South Africa

² ibid

Lekhram. From 1917-1918 Dayal assumed the editorship of the "Dharma Veer". Dayal used his voice through the paper to promote to its readership Arya Samaj ideals like the equality of women, importance of Hindi language and the abolition of various religious practices that the Arya Samaj condemned.

In 1917 he managed to persuade a Hindu couple to abandon old customs for their wedding and conducted the first wedding according to Vedic rites in South Africa.

During this time he wrote several other books dealing with topics such as his experiences in prison, Gandhi and the ideals of Vedic religion: "Our Story of Imprisonment", "The Literate and The Fanner", "The Hindu of Natal", "Gandhi, the Passive Resister", "Vedic Dharma and Arya Civilization".

Dayal also used this time to continue to promote Hinduism in South Africa and introduced the Shuddhi practice where he welcomed a number of former Hindus back to Hinduism. Those who received inspiration from his praise-worthy work were Shri B.Bechoo, F. Ramlagan, F. Satyapal, S.Bhugwandeem, D. Lutchman, Heera Singh, Bodasingh and others who emulated Bhawani Dayal and promoted the Vedic Dharma in their own areas.

In 1919 he represented South African Indians at an annual convention of the Indian National Congress (INC) in Armistar, Punjab in India. At this conference he met Indian political leaders including Lok Manya Balgangadhar Tilak, Mrs Annie Besant, Vipin Chandra Pal, Mohamed Ali Jinnah and Motilal Nehru.

In 1920 he attended the Hindi Literacy Conference in Patna in India, where he met Dr Rajendra Prasad and many famous writers. With their encouragement, he completed another book "Indians in the Transvaal". In July he travelled to Calcutta where he wrote an article in a newspaper the "Bharat Mitra" on the plight of Indian Immigration to South Africa.

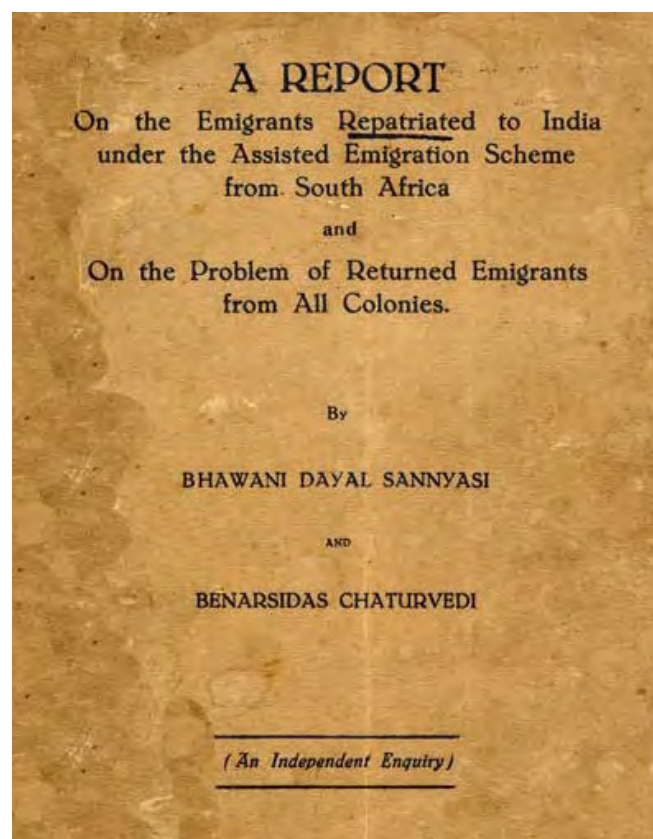
After a successful tour of raising awareness on the Indian predicament in South Africa he decided to return to South Africa. At the end of 1920 a committee was established to revive the dormant Natal Indian Congress (NIC). In March 1921, the NIC was revived. Dayal became its vice president, a position he held for 18 years. In 1938 he was elected president of NIC.

In 1921 the Union Government planned a repatriation scheme to send Natal Indians to British Guyana where there was a demand for plantation labour. In response, the NIC called a public meeting at Rawat's Bioscope Hall to protest this. Dayal was elected chair of the meeting and

put forward a strong speech resulting in a unanimous decision to reject not just the invitation on repatriation but to oppose the scheme in totality.

On 5 May 1922 Dayal's newspaper "The Hindi" was printed in Jacobs in Durban and published by "The Jagrani Press" named in honour of his wife who unfortunately passed away before the first issue. It was published in both Hindi and English and had subscribers from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya, Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad, Jamaica, Suriname, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

The paper enabled Dayal to communicate important messages as an Arya Samaj preacher including articles in honour of the work of Swami Dayanand Saraswati as well the messages of Arya Samaj missionaries who arrived in South Africa. "The Hindi" also served to bring important international figures like Andrews, Chaturvedi, Rajah Mahendra Pratab, Dr Sudhindra Rose to communicate general problems facing Indians abroad.



On 27 November 1922 Dayal embarked for India once again to represent the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) at the INC meeting. At this conference Dayal managed to affiliate the NIC, Transvaal British Indian Association and the Cape British Indian Council with the INC which entitled each organisation to send ten delegates to subsequent annual sessions of the INC. On this tour he was accompanied by B.A Tilakdharee, A.

Dookan, and R. N. Bodasingh who after the conference accompanied him across India to study the Nationalist movement.

During this tour Dayal claimed that Dayanand taught India that the only way of attaining freedom is by “the upliftment of the oppressed classes” and that he had “no doubt that the Arya Samaj would be the means of gaining Swaraj for India”. In July 1923 he returned to South Africa accompanied by Chaturvedi and Sarojini Naidu who were sent by Gandhi (president of INC) to study the situation of Indians in South Africa.

Dayal became involved in planning various strategies for the political rights of the Indian people. Among the burning issues affecting the Indians were the Colonization Scheme and Class Areas Bill. Through Sarojini Naidu's speeches those who were still tied down to their age-old customs became conscious of their ignorance. The Immigrant women received a new message. They were encouraged to tread the path of progress and infuse themselves - with self-confidence.

Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi was proud of the fact that he was born in the world-famous city of Johannesburg - not because of its high yielding gold mines but because Mahatma Gandhi had sounded there his very first call to Satyagraha, the struggle in which youth like Valliamah, Narainsamy, and Nagapan sacrificed their lives to uphold the honour and dignity of the South Africans.

In 1923 preparations for the Birth Centenary of Rishi Dayanand was being arranged in India. In South Africa, the Arya Samaj also planned a celebration. Bhawani Dayal gave publicity to this in his paper "The Hindi".

The Arya Yuvak Sabha (AYS) established in 1912 was the first to give its support to this call. The AYS had set up the Arya Anath Ashram (Aryan Benevolent Home) in Durban. In 1921, Bhawani Dayal officially opened the Arya Anath Ashram.



Under the auspices of the Arya Yuvak Sabha a meeting was held in Durban and the Maharishi Dayanand Birth Centenary Celebration Committee of South Africa was formed on 2 November 1924. Bhawani Dayal became its Chairperson. This celebration was held on a grand scale from 16 to 22 February 1925 in Durban.

The outstanding achievement of this occasion was the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal, later South Africa). Bhawani Dayal became its first President. His aim to make this body accepted by the people was extraordinarily successful.

In 1925, the Sabha held a resoundingly successful Vedic Conference in Ladysmith where about a thousand men and women took part. Thus, within a short space of time the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha became a lively, active, and respected institution. The government also recognised its credibility and accepted its nominated preachers to hold services in all the prisons every Sunday just as Christian preachers did. Through the paper "The Hindi" wide publicity was given to the work done by the Sabha.

“Arya Samaj has vitality and ambition. I, therefore, believe that its future is bright and hopeful. Of all the Indian societies, which can render service to the overseas Indians, no one can be more dynamic, progressive, enterprising, and powerful than the Arya Samaj.”³

At the beginning of 1927 Bhawani Dayal was initiated into the order of Sanyas. He was now known as Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi. He now adorned saffron robes, not to run away from the world, but to serve the world. He authored yet another book "My Experience in South Africa" in the same year.

In 1933 Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi was elected president of the Natal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha for the second time. It was under his leadership that the 50th death anniversary of Maharshi Dayanand (1883-1933) was commemorated on a grand scale. Swamiji wrote "A Brief Life-sketch of Dayanand" (in English) which was printed and distributed free. The preface of the book was written by the then Agent General of India, Sir Kunwar Maharaj Singh. During the same period Swamiji's Vedic Prayer Book was published. This prayer book contains the Sandhya, Havan, Swastivachan and Shantikaran hymns. Some of the hymns were translated into English. This book was very popular in India and abroad and within a short space of time five editions were printed.

³ ibid

Swamiji also wrote a book entitled "History of the Arya Samaj Abroad". Unfortunately, this did not get into print. However, the International Aryan League, New Delhi made use of the material and later published a book "Arya Samaj and Indians Abroad" for the centenary celebrations of the Arya Samaj. During his term of office the Natal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Swamiji invited the Girl Guides of Arya Girls' College of Baroda under the leadership of Pt. Anandpriya who made a remarkably successful tour of South Africa.

Beside his work in South Africa, Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi, during his trips to and from India, stopped in Portuguese East Africa to preach. On Diwali Day 1937 he laid the foundation stone of the Veda Mandir in Lorenzo Marques, (now Maputo) the Capital of Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique). In July 1938 he performed the official opening. Established by the Bharat Samaj, the Mandir preached the ancient Vedic philosophy in the Hindu community.

On 1st May 1938 Swamiji was elected President of the Natal Indian Congress at its annual conference. Under his presidency there was new awakening. He was instrumental in uniting the different factions. Branches of the Congress were formed in all the cities and towns across Natal. The result was a membership exceeding five thousand, making the Natal Indian Congress the people's congress.

During his term of office the NIC Conference held in Durban in December 1938 was an outstanding success. Much publicity was given to the conference in the Natal Mercury, the Natal Daily News, the Natal Witness, and other papers.

After serving the immigrant Indians for 29 years Swamiji decided to leave South Africa and settle in India to carry out his work in India on a more permanent basis.

On 14 September 1941 under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress he was given a grand farewell reception. The Chairman of this reception was the Mayor of Durban, Councillor R. Ellis Brown. Swamiji was given a Silver Salver Address for his meritorious work. In his response he stressed the importance of unity and urged the people to always strive to go forward.

In India, he opened an office of the Natal Indian Congress and was able to keep in constant contact with the Indians in South Africa. Many South African's benefited from this during the apartheid years and post his death, when they went to India to study. The links between this office, INC,

the ANC in exile and the NIC in South Africa was kept alive even though the Indian government boycotted the apartheid government of South Africa.

On 9 May 1950 at Pravasi Bhawan in Ajmer Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi passed on.

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Author: Karuna Mohan



Celebrating the Founding of the Arya Samaj

Since 10 April 1875 the Arya Samaj has been working for the good of humanity. In celebrating the founding of the Arya Samaj, it is only fitting to pay tribute to its founder - Maharishi Yogi Dayanand Sarasvati. In this article aspects of his life, his mission, his vision, his sacrifices, and his universal thought are covered.

A *Maharishi* is a great benefactor of humanity. Swamiji was a Maharishi and a Yogi of the highest order. He gave light to the world through his unique and meaningful interpretation of the Vedas based on truth. With knowledge and reason he removed the darkness of superstition, fear, blind faith, and ignorance of truth from society.

He was happy to address a congregation at church. He was comfortable to stay at the home of a Muslim. He was humble enough to clean the sewer of his Guru and take a beating for not doing it properly. He was kind and compassionate to the extent that he washed and served his attendant during a bout of illness.

Aum udhbudhyaswaagne prati jaagrihi...Let the mind awake, arise and be alert. Yajur Veda 15.54

On the 1st big dark night of *Shivraatri*, a young boy's mind was spiritually awakened and, on the 2nd, big dark night of *Deepavali*, an enlightened *Rishi* was silenced.

Swamiji declared that the Veda is a blessing from God and is the birth right of every human being.

Yasmin rchah saam yajoomshi, yasmin pratishtita rathanaa bhaa vivaaraah, yasmin shchitam sarvamotam prajaanaam, tan me manah shivah sankalpam astu...The knowledge of the Veda is embedded in the depths of the mind of every human. Yajur Veda 34.5

It is therefore the duty of each of us to realise, awaken and live by this, then we can have peace of mind. In clearing a path forward his persistent call was: Go back to the Vedas.

As a Yogi, whilst living in the present he gained knowledge of the past and chartered the future path for society based on knowledge of mind and the mind of others, knowledge of the soul, of death and of creation.

He had gained full control of his senses - and could live for months without food and water, and he wilfully

controlled and expelled his last breath reciting the Gythree Mantra.

A few extraordinary feats of his yogic qualities, which he neither publicised nor claimed any fame for:

He overcame 16 or 17 attempts on his life, simply for bringing out the truths of the Veda.

When a live cobra was thrown at him, Swamiji instantly grabbed it and crushed its head in one hand, leaving his attackers in shock and shame.

There are at least two independent reports of witnesses seeing him rise from the ground or levitate whilst in deep meditation.

A lighter incident - some athletes questioned his strength as a Swami and Yogi. Swamiji wet a part of his *dhoti* and squeezed out the water. He then asked the athletes to squeeze the *dhoti* - not one of them was able to take out a single drop of water! Similarly, professional wrestlers could not even raise his arm.

With one hand he stopped a carriage from being pulled by two horses.

Swamiji successfully debated against three hundred orthodox Pandits on the truth of the Vedas.

He did not claim to start a new religion, in fact he said: "It is wrong for you to say you believe in the religion of Dayanand (or for that matter, the Arya Samaj), you should say that your religion is Vedic."

Rishi Dayanand restored the importance and procedure of *havan, agnihotra, homa or yajna* to its rightful place in Hindu religious practices as daily performance in every home for the benefit of life and the environment.

Being totally against image and idol worship in keeping with the Vedas, he applied this principle to himself - clearly against any photograph, image, statue, or monuments of himself being displayed. He made it consistently clear that he sought neither honour nor fame nor any position - having declined the position of President, Guru, Patron or Param Sahayak - supreme helper, of the Arya Samaj, for two reasons:

- 1) He rejected the concept of gurudom and guru worship, and
- 2) if he was to be called Param Sahayak, how then should we address Paramatma, Who is our Supreme Helper?

This speaks greatly of his unconditional bhakti, humility, and unselfishness.

One of his favourite mantras was: *Aum vishwani deva savitar duritaani paraasuva, yadbhadran tanna aasuva.* Rik 5.82.5; Yajur 30.3

What then is the monument of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, and how should we pay tribute to him?

The 10 Principles are his living monument - they are designed for the welfare of all humanity for all times. The principles are not merely of his own making - each has its source in the Veda. In like manner, each of the 16 *Sanskaaras* that he fine-tuned also has its authority in the Veda.

Therefore to be Arya is not simply by birth or name or association with any organisation, but by translating the word Arya or nobleness into our thinking, our speech, our behaviour, our work, and our relationships.

The Rishi's vision and expectation for the members and followers of Arya Samaj was very clear and still very relevant:

1. The President and other members of the Samaj shall, for the maintenance of mutual goodwill, keep their minds wholly divested of all feelings of pride, of wilfulness, hate, anger, etc. and being

free of enmity; and pure of heart, love one another as each would love one's own self: Life and Teachings P105.

2. The Vedic teacher (Purohit) must deal with the work he chose and is called to, irrespective of all considerations whether he/she was being appreciated or not. It must be a lifelong devotion to Vedic regeneration and developing a society of nobles.

Let us make a solemn pledge, a vrat to make this our *Rshi Rn* - not our debt, but our indebtedness to Swamiji, and recommit ourselves to living his vision and his life's message. Rishi Dayanand was, is and always will be the soul of Arya Samaj. After all, he committed and gave his very life as his *Rishi Rn*.

To this end Maharshi Dayanand Commemoration must remind us of his name and his dharma and his karma.

The world is still to realise the full truths of the Veda, and the world is still to appreciate the truths of Rishi Dayanand's work. Veda, Truth and Dayanand are but synonymous.

Author: Pt Dharmanand Raghubir

Based on sermons for Arya Samaj SA Founders Day, 10 April 2010 and Arya Samaj Phoenix Bahukund Yajna, 17 May 2014



The Aryan Benevolent Home: 100 years of Service

The Aryan Benevolent Home (ABH) serves as a very poignant reminder to us all that our humanity and our humanitarianism is still very much alive.

It serves as a beacon of caring, sharing, serving, and loving of those who, through no fault of their own, have landed in the ABH but who can happily say that this is indeed a "home away from home".

ABH is not just an institution for the homeless. It is a home. It is not just an abode for the aged or the elderly. It is a home. It is not just a refuge for children. It is a home. And it is not just a sanctuary for abused women and the non-ambulant. It is very much a home.

From its founders⁴ to the CEO, to the caring staff, to the residents themselves, ABH stands tall as a monument of service to all humanity, and they deserve our gratitude, appreciation, and support.

From a novel, "For whom the Bell Tolls" by Ernest Hemingway there is sheer truism:

"Today is one day in all the days that will ever be. But what will happen in all the other days that ever come can depend on what you do today".

This quotation accurately represents the story of our Indian forbears or ancestors, who left the shores of their native country of India to seek greener pastures and a "better life" on a foreign land that they knew nothing about.

A land that would abuse them, humiliate them, hurt them, demonize them, and relegate them to "second-class citizens" - but a land that could never conquer or repress their resilient and abiding spirit, their determination, their zest to achieve success beyond their own calling and ultimately their legacy that is so intrinsically bound to this generation and those generations yet unborn.

And we are here today as living proof that the heads of yore failed miserably to subjugate, oppress, or take away the dignity of those brave men and women who suffered so much, so that we could live better.

⁴ See Veda Jyoti April 04/2022 for further details on the Founders of the ABH

The first Indians were "imported" to South Africa by the Dutch East India Company in the 17th century as slaves, and they were mainly taken to the Cape. The majority were brought here by the British as Indentured labourers to work on the sugar plantations - but they were literally slaves to the white man - indenture was just a word of semantics for slavery.

Most of them originated from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh in India. There were also those who were called "Passenger Indians"- these people came at their own expense, and they were mainly from Gujerat - many were traders, entrepreneurs. artisans, teachers, and shop assistants.

In 1852, a farmer by the name of Edmund Morewood succeeded in perfecting the production of sugar on his farm in Compensation (Compensation is an area North of Durban between Ballito and Stanger - now Kwa Dukuza).



This then attracted more colonialists to the country, which meant more farms - which meant the requirement of a labour force. The Zulus, the Indigenous people of Natal at the time, refused to work for the whites and a man by the name of James Saunders then recommended to the Natal government that Indians be brought to work on the fields.

The recruitment process then took root in India and people were promised land, wealth, and better prospects in Natal. That was a lie.

Thousands left their villages where they lived in abject poverty in the hope that there was an unseen benefit that lay in wait in South Africa.

People left their villages with their meagre belongings, tied in a bundle, and placed on their heads as they trudged many miles to Madras and Calcutta (now Kolkata) which were the ports of departure in India.

They all had to sign an "agreement" - famously termed as the *Girmit* and they were known as the "*Girmityas*".

Many lost their lives because of weariness, hunger, and illness during their long treks from their villages to the ports of departure. But for those who did make it another horror awaited them.

The recruiters had to get a fixed percentage of women before the ships left port.

Each passenger was given a "Tin ticket" - an identification disc hung around the neck or strapped to their arm, and this was their identity thereafter.

The first ship to leave Madras in October 1860 was the *Truro* (Truroland is an industrial area in Tongaat) with 342 passengers on board, and she anchored in Port Natal on 16 November 1860. The second ship, *The Belvedere* (Belvedere is also a suburb in the town of Tongaat, North of Durban), docked in Port Natal on 26 November 1860. This ship left from Calcutta, also with 342 passengers on board. The trip from Calcutta was longer because of the difference in the distances of the two cities to South Africa.



Life on these ships were horrendous - quite unlike the luxuries on board the cruise liners of today. They were treated very poorly, often abused, and assaulted - there is documented evidence of young women who were sexually abused by the ship's captain. the ship's doctor and the crew and many travelled in fear.

For many, it was their first sight of the sea - the *kala pani*, (Black Waters) the *paglaa samundar* (mad ocean) as they called it.

These Indians were referred to as the "coolies"- the word *kuli* in Tamil means payment for menial work done - and when they arrived, they were often gawked at by the whites and the Zulus, because of their strange tongue, their dress, and their complexion.

The Ships' lists - which is the most important document that conveyed the identities of the Indentured labourer -

recorded by officers who rarely understood those on board. Many names were misspelt because those clerks could not understand the Indians and to make life easier for themselves, they referred to the Indians as Mary and Samy!

The Indians were greeted with animosity and every step of the way, their lives were worsened.

They were sent to work on the sugar cane fields, the railways, to work as servants, some as *Ayahs* (Nannies) for the white children, some as waiters and some as cooks.

Their lives were atrocious. They had literally become the slaves of the white man. And the white man capitalized on this.

Indian men who could speak English were employed as *sirdars* (overseers or supervisors) and many of these Sirdars often used their powers to abuse and mistreat their fellow men.

The Indians had to make many adaptations with regards to religion, language, caste, dress, food etc. to survive their hardships.

But the Indians were enterprising - after their daily slog in the fields they tilled the land around their homes, planting seeds they brought from India and the crops they harvested provided them with food - the excess was sold to locals and to their employers. The will of the Indians to prosper oftentimes infuriated the whites.

After the worker completed his indenture, he could return home or continue working. As many could not afford to go back home, they remained as they found that they could prosper in South Africa. Some re-indentured, some leased or bought small plots of land which they cultivated and in 1911, India stopped the immigration of Indentured Indians because of the stories of abuse.

One story of abuse is documented as follows:

A white employer who lived outside Durban was so angry with his indentured labourer called Ramaswamy, that he tied him up and began whipping him repeatedly. When he stopped, Ramaswamy was still moving. He then tied him to the rafters and began whipping him again until he could no longer do so. Ramaswamy's skin fell off as the blood dripped to the floor - such was the ferocity of the beating. And when this white man satisfied his lust of hate and could not continue with the beatings, he then sent Ramaswamy to the magistrate who listened to him and despite his story ordered him back to the farm. Ramaswamy refused to go back to the farm and walked

all the way to Durban to report to the authorities. The authorities refused to listen to him and charged him for desertion and sent him back to the farm.

The last ship to arrive was the Umlazi XV111 and a total of 384 ships that transported over 152 184 indentured labourers had arrived in South Africa.

The Indians were an enterprising people - just the same as all pioneering people all over the world.

They scrimped, saved, and ensured that their children were educated so that they could get decent jobs and become prosperous.

There were no schools or religious institutions, so they built their own by collecting funds from the community and their employers. - quite unlike the louts and thugs of today who burn and destroy our institutions of learning.

Over the years the Indian has made huge progress and has contributed to the development of South Africa in every field - education, business, medicine, agriculture, commerce, and the like, rising to the top in many cases, as they have done all over the world - after all Rishi Sunak, of Indian origin, is now Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Granted, there were some who were weak, some were lazy, and some were rascals and louts, but the majority were hard working. The Indian citizen of South Africa, from the dark and dreadful days of indenture to the soaring eagle he is of today, is an epitome of what energy and daring can do to the soul of the down-trodden, when the mind is held high, and the body is willing.

Like our compatriots in the Cape, who add colour to our diversity, I am talking of the wonderful Cape Koon Carnival that bedazzles with song, dance and gaiety, the Indian citizen of South Africa has indisputably and resplendently coloured our human tapestry in this country with his unique brand of culture, tradition, cuisine, and patriotism.

Even when we are attacked for no reason as we have been, we rise and embrace the attacker with empathy and altruism, with benevolence and kindness, and indeed with a sense of kindred humanity that was bequeathed to us over a century and a half ago by men and women of fortitude and courage who chose to dare, who chose to challenge and who chose survival over submission and surrender.



Acknowledgement to UC Berkeley News

To quote Mr. Mandela: "it always seems impossible until it is done" and the immortality of the Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu's words, "my humanity is bound up in yours, for we could only be human together" - is what our indenture ultimately meant to all of South Africa.

C.G.Hennings in his book entitled, "The Indentured Indian in Natal, 1860-1917", summarizes the adversity and triumph of the Indian in South Africa:

"They will never be able to eradicate the knowledge of the extreme pain which the immigrant Coolies suffered and deny the heavy price they paid with their life's blood so that their descendants might live in comfort and decency."

Author: Narendh Ganesh - Keynote address at the ABH on 23 November 2022 on the occasion of the arrival of the 1860 Indian Indentured labourer to South Africa.



How the Arya Samaj Shaped my Life

I grew up in Candella Road, Sherwood, Durban in an Arya Samaj home. My paternal and maternal grandfathers were school principals who were attracted to Maharishi Dayanand Saraswathi's teachings not only because of its social reforms (such as granting rights to widows and liberation of downtrodden women) but also because of the removal of superstitious beliefs and customs from religious practices.

Being born in a home which was constantly frequented by Vedic priests during the 1950s and 1960s, such as, Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, Pandit Ishwar Singh of Port Shepstone, Pandit Jugmohan Singh, and Pandit Dookran of Pietermaritzburg, Pandit Naidoo and Pandit Tulsiram Maharaj of Durban, it naturally set the tone for my participation in the Arya Samaj in South Africa.

As a university student I used to be invited by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (APS) in Durban, to deliver talks on religious occasions. I was privileged to have shared the stage with Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, Mr Shishupal Rambharos and Mr Bal Ganesh. Whenever I was called upon to do so, I also assisted the APS with the editing of their print material.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati had ignited the spark for the education of the girl child and this burning need was imbibed by and continued by Arya Samaj followers in South Africa.

In the early days of 1940s and 1950s, in South Africa, parents were loath to send their young daughters to the government aided co-education schools, so they kept their daughters at home. To ensure that the girls in the community received an education, my grandfather, Mr P Chirkoot, together with members of the community, built a one roomed school for the education of girls. Thereafter the school expanded one room at a time and in the sixties, I received my primary education at that very school, the Candella Estate Hindu Sangatan Girls' School.

My secondary education was done at the Durban Indian Girls' High School and thereafter I went on to study at the University of Durban Westville, now University of Kwa Zulu Natal, where I obtained the B.A. and LL.B degrees.

During the apartheid era articles as a candidate attorney was difficult to come by as all jobs were reserved for

“White Males only”. In 1978 Mr Raj Bodasingh accepted me as his candidate attorney but could not register me with the Law Society until he had been in practice for more than three years. Despite these apartheid challenges I was admitted as an Attorney in 1980 and thereafter qualified as a Conveyancer and a Notary Public.

I was in private practice for 15 years. I practised as a professional assistant for the legal firm, Will and Drummond, in Howick. Whilst Mr Will managed his practice in Howick, I travelled every day between Howick and Mooi River where I managed the practice in Mooi River.



After I obtained the qualifications of Conveyancer and Notary Public, I joined the firm Rajen Moodley and Cajee in Pietermaritzburg and practiced as Conveyancer and Notary until Mr Rajen Moodley sold his practice to me in 1987.

In the mid-1980s I was a member of NADEL, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, and the Lawyers for Democracy in Pietermaritzburg. I assisted in the opposition of the tricameral parliament by doing house visits in Howick where I resided and educated the residents about the tricameral system, which if accepted, would treat them as second-class citizens.

In the 1980s during our stay in Howick, my family joined the Veda Dharam Sabha of Howick, and I was tasked to direct the programme at the launch event of the Veda Dharam Sabha, an affiliate of the Arya Samaj in Howick.

In 1994 I enrolled at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in Pietermaritzburg and completed the course work for the Master of Laws in Environmental Law.

The passion for serving one's community arose from the Arya Samaj principles (5,6, and 7).

I gave my services, *gratis*, to the Pietermaritzburg Indian Child and Family Welfare Society in the 1990s and served on its Executive Committee. In 1992, in preparation for the dismantling of apartheid, I assisted in the negotiations and amalgamation of the White, Black, Coloured and Indian Child Welfare Societies in Pietermaritzburg, into one non-racial body.

After the transition from apartheid in 1994, I was head-hunted and in 1995 I took up the position as Senior Property Manager at Transnet, in Johannesburg. At that time Spoornet, a division of Transnet, was the largest property owner in South Africa. I managed their property portfolio and commenced with the much-needed transformation.

In 1998 I was promoted to Executive Manager – Head of Aero-political Affairs, at South African Airways, also a division of Transnet. I remained with the airline until my retirement in 2015.

During that early period of democracy, I had to break the barriers to entry into an Afrikaner male-dominated environment where women were not made to feel welcome. Despite this challenge, I worked hard and quickly became *au fait* with the aviation world, terminology and business and proved that women are resilient and can do the job. This earned me the respect of all, not only at SAA but also in the aviation industry.



My role entailed accompanying Government (the Department of Transport) to countries throughout the world to attend and assist at bilateral and multilateral aviation negotiations for air traffic rights for South Africa. I served under Ministers Dullah Omar, Mac Maharaj, and Jeff Hadebe, when each was a Minister of Transport. The latter invited me in 2004 to accompany his team to the International Organisation of Civil Aviation (ICAO) Conference at its Head Office in Montreal, Canada. At one of the sessions in Montreal I was tasked by SA Government to represent South Africa and deliver South Africa's views on the matter.

I represented SAA at all government meetings impacting aviation to discuss and debate the issues surrounding potential changes and its impact on aviation (e.g. Dept of Home Affairs -immigration, Airports Company of South Africa- any changes impacting airlines and aviation, South African Revenue Services (SARS)- any changes to airport taxes, air Traffic Navigation Services (ATNS) changes and con-committent fees etc.). I also attended Aviation Conferences throughout the world and presenting the South African viewpoint. Examples of the cities and countries where conferences were hosted are USA-Washington DC, Canada-Montreal, Dubai, Abuja-Nigeria, Mauritius, Africa- Namibia, Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, etc.) At one such conference I presented a paper in Abuja, Nigeria where the local media praised South Africa for its presentation.

I was a member of the Legal Committee of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) based in Nairobi and a member of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa based in Johannesburg.

I was awarded the Post Graduate Diploma in Compliance and Corporate governance from the University of Johannesburg and obtained the Money Laundering module *cum laude*. I then qualified as Compliance officer and was a member of the Compliance Institute of South Africa.

I also qualified from the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria, in Senior leadership Development and obtained various other aviation qualifications from a number of institutions.

During my retirement, unable to remain idle, I travelled every month for 5 years to Durban to study Hindi, at the Hindi Shiksha Sangh and completed Kovid and graduated in 2019. This was on my bucket list!

I am currently studying online with the Arya Samaj's School of Vedic Studies. This is to read, recite and teach the Vedas, one of the duties of all members of the Arya Samaj.

Had I not been born in an Arya Samaj family and married into an Arya Samaj family as well, where women are treated as equals, I would have not reached the heights to serve my country and bring about change in my little way.

Author: Oosha Devi Chirkoot-Lalla



Message from the President

Dear Readers

Namaste

I am sure this issue of the Veda Jyoti has brought back many memories for most of you, while some are still trying to understand what the Arya Samaj is all about.

The Arya Samaj, as you would have read, was founded by Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a monk who, in fulfilling his debt of gratitude to his Guru, Virjanand, promised to spread his knowledge of the Vedas not only amongst the people of India but globally, as the Vedas are for every Being, irrespective of caste, colour, creed and status.

The Arya Samaj has a set of ten Principles which speak of One God who is known by many names; it speaks of His Word, The Vedas; it speaks of learning and teaching the Vedas which is a way of life. It even speaks of good governance, character of leaders who govern and lead a nation. It speaks of social justice, social cohesion, and the welfare of all which surpasses one's own welfare. It speaks of Praise, Prayer and Worship which is an important aspect of our lives, for without the life force given to us by the Supreme Being, we are nothing.

I was paging through a well-known magazine where I read that Bill Gates, a self-made billionaire, is still looking for happiness! You would have thought that a man of his status would be happy.

This is what the Vedas has taught me. That our ultimate happiness lies in getting to know our Paramatma, who is the One Supreme Being who pervades this entire universe.

Vedic Culture teaches us that there is one central thought which drives a person, a family, a community, and a nation. That all Matter (Prakriti) is animated by the Param Atma Tattwa (world consciousness) and the body is animated by the Atma Tattwa or the Purusha (Spirit) For us to reach our goal of God Realisation, we have to make use of the material resources given to us to enjoy with renunciation.

Dear Readers, the knowledge of the Vedas is vast, and the Arya Samaj has the School of Vedic Studies which enables you to attend classes online and to learn more. We also have published a set of books that simplifies Hinduism and we have graded examinations for both adults and children.

As part of the global organisation of the Arya Samaj Movement, we have just launched the 200th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Swami Dayanand on the 12 February. This celebration will be observed over the next two years, culminating in 2025 with the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Arya Samaj Movement and the 100th Anniversary of the Arya Samaj Movement in South Africa.

We welcome you to join in our celebrations which will be sent out to you by means of the print and digital media as well as through our social media platforms.

I wish you well as you go about your daily lives. Keep safe, and calm with the ongoing electricity, and water outages and give off your best in everything you do.

Pt Arthi Nanackchand Shanand



Sanskrit words explained

दृष्टि

dr̥ṣṭi

Dr̥ṣṭi [feminine] seeing, looking at (genitive); viewing, beholding (literally and figuratively); sense or power of sight; look, glance; eye.

The word Drishti covers the following:

- 1) Seeing, viewing
- 2) Seeing with the mental eye
- 3) Knowing, knowledge
- 4) The eye, the faculty of seeing, sight
- 5) A look, glance
- 6) View, notion
- 7) Consideration, regard
- 8) Intellect, wisdom
- 9) Vision

The meaning of *Drishya* which is a Hindi word is:

Sight, it means visible or something that can be seen.

BACK TO THE VEDAS LECTURES



Topic: What is the Relevance of Swami Dayanand's Reforms to our Current Crisis?

Speaker: Pt Yuvesh Sundar

Wednesday 19th April 2023 7pm to 8pm (GMT+2)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81299888772?pwd=bnFhRTcxS0htWTBDWE5FYVgza2w2dz09>

Meeting ID: 812 9988 8772

Passcode: back2vedas

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Announcements

You are invited to send articles to the editorial committee for publication. Please email your submissions to admin@aryasamajsa.org

Acceptance conditions:

1. All submissions must be in word for the attention of the editorial committee.
2. All Sanskrit words must be in Italics.
3. Photographs submitted must be in high resolution.
4. All references must be cited.
5. The limits for articles will be as follows:
 - 5.1. Short articles & messages three hundred words,
 - 5.2. Current issues and social justice up to nine hundred words
 - 5.3. Feature articles 1500 to 3000 words,
 - 5.4. Secondary articles up to 1500 words.
6. The acceptance of articles will be considered based on the following criteria:
 - 6.1. Vedic teachings,
 - 6.2. Principles of the Arya Samaj,
 - 6.3. Social justice and social action,
 - 6.4. Relevance to current issues.

To contribute to projects of the Arya Samaj contact admin@aryasamajsa.org
Please send your comments and suggestions to admin@aryasamajsa.org

Rig Veda 9.63.5

कृण्वन्तो विश्वामार्यम् "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam" Make the World Noble

Yajur Veda 36.18

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूताननि समीक्षे mitrasyāham chakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtānani samīkṣe May we all live in friendly cooperation and mutual trust

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे "mitrasyaaham chakshushaa sameekshaamahe" May we look at all with an Equal and Friendly Eye

Veda Jyoti Founding Editors were Pt Nardev Vedalankar (1913-1994) and the late Manohar Somera



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