

*Obituary to Pundit
Dayanand Saraswati*



Madame Blavatsky on the Life of a Great Man

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a Master Spirit has passed away from India. Pundit Dayānand Saraswatī, the Founder and Supreme Chief of the Ārya Samāj of Āryāvarta, is gone. The irrepressible, energetic Reformer, whose mighty voice and passionate eloquence for the last few years raised thousands of people in India from lethargic indifference and stupor into active patriotism, is no more. He has passed out of this plane of strife and suffering, into a higher and more perfect state of being. . . . A special telegram from Ajmere brought to the many Samajes the melancholy news that their master Swamijee Dayānand Saraswatī breathed his last at 6 p.m., on October 30th.

*De mortuis nil nisi bonum. . . .*¹ [49]

All our differences have been burnt with the body and with its now sacred ashes they are forever scattered to the four winds. We remember only the grand virtues and noble qualities of our former colleague, teacher and late antagonist. We bear in mind but his life-long devotion to the cause of Āryan regeneration; his ardent love for the grand philosophy of his forefathers; his relentless, untiring zeal in the work of the projected social and religious reforms; and, it is with unfeigned sorrow that we now hasten to join the ranks of his many mourners. In him India has lost one of her noblest sons. A patriot in the true sense of the word, Swamijee Dayānand laboured from his earliest years for the recovery of the lost treasures of Indian intellect. His zeal for the reformation of his motherland was exceeded only by his unbounded learning. Whatever might be said as to his interpretation of the sacred writings, there can be but one opinion as to his knowledge of Sanskrit, and the impetus to the study of both received at his hands. There are few towns and but one province we believe — namely Madras — that Pundit Dayānand did not visit in furtherance of his missionary work, and fewer still where he has not left the impress of his remarkable mind behind him. He threw, as it were, a bomb-shell in the midst of the stagnant masses of degenerated Hinduism, and fired with love for the teachings of the Rishis and Vedic learning the hearts of all who were drawn within the influence of his eloquent oratory. Certainly, there was no better or grander orator in Hindi and Sanskrit than Swamijee Dayānand throughout the length and breadth of this land. And, if he did not always bear with noble fortitude sectarian persecution and contradictions, it is only because in him, as in all other mortal men, the maxim *errare humanum est* had to be exemplified in this world of imperfections.

As soon as the sad rumour was confirmed, Colonel Olcott, who was then at Cawnpore, paid a public tribute to the Swami's memory. He said that whatever might have been [50] our rights or wrongs in the controversy, and whatever other Pundits or Orientalists could say against Swamijee's scholarship, there was room for no two opinions as to his energetic patriotism or of the nationalising influence he exerted upon

¹ ["Of the dead, [say] nothing but good," as they are unable to defend themselves.]

his followers. In Pundit Dayānand Saraswatī there was a total absence of everything like degrading sycophancy and toadyism towards foreigners from interested motives. At Bara-Banki, Lucknow, our President repeated the same ideas to an immense audience in the Garden-Palace (Kaiser-bag) of the ex-king of Oude, and the sentiment was warmly acknowledged.

Truly, however heretical and blasphemous might have appeared his religious radicalism in the sight of old orthodox Brahmanism, still his teachings and the Vedic doctrines propagated by him were a thousand times more consonant with *Śruti* and even *Smṛiti* than the doctrines taught by all other native Samajes put together. If he merged the old idols into ONE living Being, Īśvara, as being only the attributes and powers of the latter, he yet had never attempted the folly of forcing down the throats of his followers the hideous compound of a Durga-Moses, Christian-Koran, and Buddha-Chaitanya mixture of the modern Reformers. The “Ārya Samāj” rites make certainly the nearest approach to the real Vedic national religion. And now, on the death of Swamijee, there is no one we know of in India capable of taking his place. The Ārya Samajes, as far as we could ascertain, are all conducted by men who can as little fill the vacant place as a cardboard tree of a dramatical stage can become a substitute for the strong cedar, the king of the Himalayan forests. Loving all Āryāvarta, as we do, for its own sake, it is with sincere sadness and fear and with a deep sense of sympathy for bereaved India that we say once more: the death of Pundit Dayānand Saraswatī is an irreparable loss to the whole country. At the present chaotic stage of its reformatory progress, it is simply a national calamity!

In connection with the above sad event, we may take, this opportunity to make a few remarks in answer to a [51] certain surprise expressed by several correspondents. They are at a loss to realize, they state, that a Yogi credited with some psychological powers, such as Swamiji Dayānand, was unable to foresee, the great loss his death would cause to India; was he then no Yogi, no “Brahma-Rishi,” as the organ of the Lahore Samāj called him, that he knew it not?

To this we answer that we can swear that he had *foreseen* his death, and so far back as two years ago. Two copies of his will sent by him at the time to Col. Olcott and to the editor of this Magazine respectively — both of which are preserved by us as a memorial of his by-gone friendship — are a good proof of it. He told us repeatedly at Meerut he would never see 1884. But even had he not foreseen his death we do not see what bearing it can have upon the Yogi powers of the defunct? The greatest adepts living are but mortal men, after all, and sooner or later have to die. No adept is proof against accident, unless he uses selfishly his acquired powers. For, unless he is constantly watching over his own personality, and cares little for the rest of mankind, he is as liable to fall a victim to disease and death as any other man. The childish, not to say absurd, ideas about Yogis, and their *supernatural* powers — whereas they are at best but *superhuman* — that we often find current among our own Theosophists, and the superstitious and grotesque tales narrated of these holy personages among that class of Hindus, which being more orthodox than educated, derives all its ideas from the dead-letter traditions of the *Purānas* and *Śastras*, have very little to do with sober truth. An adept, or Raja Yogi (we now speak of the real, not the fictitious ones of idle rumour) is simply the custodian of the secrets of the

hidden possibilities of nature; the master and guide of her undiscovered potentialities, one who awakens and arouses them into activity by abnormal yet natural powers, and by furnishing them with the requisite group of conditions which lie dormant and can, rarely, if ever, be brought together if left alone. *The Ārya* and the Ārya-Samajists combat our views and criticize them whenever they can. We would seriously and in a spirit [52] of earnest and sincere sympathy for *The Ārya*, now left to float without rudder or compass, advise it to turn its attention rather to the wants and imperfections of poor India than the possible failings of the Theosophical Society. The latter does its duty in the best way it can, and would hardly lose its time in criticizing its colleagues or the work of the Ārya Samajes, with which it has nothing to do whatever, since the separation of the two Societies.

The brave dog watches its premises in silence, the cowardly barks outside its domain,

says an old proverb. Why lose one's energy in useless wrangle? It will be time for *The Ārya* to lift its voice in legitimate defence when attacked. But so far it reminds us of the nervous wayfarer, who travelling by night shouts at the top of his voice calling out to imaginary attendants to frighten away as imaginary assailants. Let it rest in peace. Less than ever the Theosophists feel inclined to attack the Samajes, the labour of love of their departed and once revered ally and teacher. Nor will they ever feel scared by a whole army of phantoms, least of all likely to be appalled by the attacks of one *Fanthome*.¹



¹ Illustration by Biswajit Debnath.



For full particulars concerning the relation between The Theosophical Society and Swami Dayānand Saraswatī, the Founder of the Ārya Samāj of Āryāvarta (India), see Col. Henry S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, pp. 394-407, and the *Extra Supplement to The Theosophist*, Vol. III, July 1882, where all the documentary evidence is gathered together.

In addition to the above, authoritative material is contained in a Letter entitled "A Mental Puzzle," addressed to the Manager of *The Theosophist* by the Adept known under the name of Nārāyana, spoken of by Madame Blavatsky as the "Tiravellum Mahatma," who signs his communication as "One of the Hindu Founders of the Parent Theosophical Society," and dates it "Tiruvallam Hills, May 17th." This Letter appeared in the *Supplement to The Theosophist*, Vol. III, June 1882, p. 6. It is immediately followed by a brief Editorial Note, which is probably by Madame Blavatsky.

The following articles and comments pertaining to this subject should also be mentioned, for the sake of completeness:

- 1 An unsigned review of a "Reply to Extra Supplement, etc." which was issued by the Lahore Ārya Samāj, *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, April 1883, pp. 172-73;
- 2 H.P. Blavatsky's article "The Arya and its 'Out-station' Correspondence," *The Theosophist*, [53] Vol. IV, November 1882, p. 49;
- 3 Her Editorial Note to "Special Telegrams," *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, Supplement to May 1883, p. 7;
- 4 Her article "The Shylocks of Lahore," *ibid.*, pp. 9-11; and
- 5 Her Letter to the Editor of the *Bombay Gazette*, published in *Light*, London, Vol. II, May 13th, 1882, p. 229.

All of these items by H.P. Blavatsky can be found in their chronological order in the present Series of volumes.

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