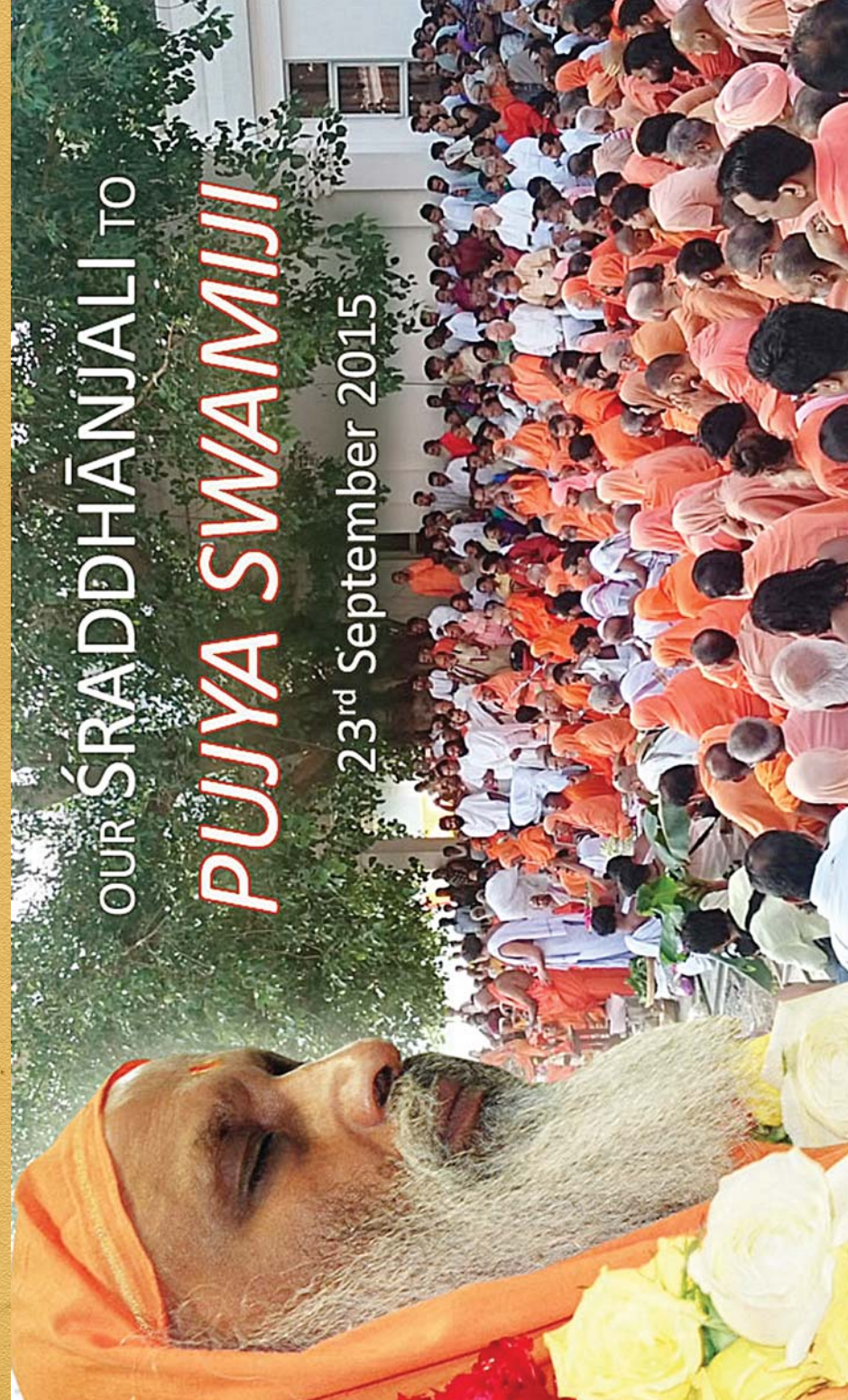


# Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Rs. 15/-



सुशास्त्रे चरन्तं सदा सच्चरन्तं जनान् बोधयन्तं भवाद्वरन्तम् ।  
मठांस्थापयन्तं गुरुन् पूजयन्तं दयानन्दरूपं मदाचार्यमीडे ॥  
अहो सास्त्रम् ! अहो सास्त्रम् ! अहो गुरुः ! अहो गुरुः !

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Pin 249 201, Uttarakhand  
Ph.0135-2431769  
Fax: 0135 2430769  
Website: [www.dayananda.org](http://www.dayananda.org)  
Email: [dayas1088@hotmail.com](mailto:dayas1088@hotmail.com)

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Institute of Vedanta and  
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*Arsha Vidya  
Newsletter*

In fearless voice may  
we proclaim

The Rishi's message  
from all house-tops

And bring the men  
of different claim

To a fold of Love  
where oneness lasts!

## Guruvarashtakam

### ॥ गुरुवरषट्कम् ॥

मुमुक्षुहृदयविराजिताय अखण्डार्थतत्त्वप्रबोधकाय ।  
दक्षिणामूर्तिरूपभूचराय नमो दयानन्दगुरुवराय ॥ १ ॥  
आर्षतत्त्वोपदेशनिरताय आर्षकलाभिज्ञसम्मानदाय ।  
आर्षविद्याकुलप्रवर्धकाय नमो दयानन्दगुरुवराय ॥ २ ॥  
सनातनधर्मप्रवर्तकाय सुविज्ञानवैराग्यविग्रहाय ।  
शान्ताय विश्वजनवन्दिताय नमो दयानन्दगुरुवराय ॥ ३ ॥  
अपारकरुणासिन्धुरूपाय यतिश्रेष्ठाय विजितेन्द्रियाय ।  
धीराय दीनजनशरण्याय नमो दयानन्दगुरुवराय ॥ ४ ॥  
बहुजन्मकृतपुण्यलभ्याय शिष्यवात्सल्यादिगुणोज्ज्वलाय ।  
अहिंसादिसद्गुणपोषकाय नमो दयानन्दगुरुवराय ॥ ५ ॥  
ईश्वरनियतिपरायणाय श्रुतिसारदोहविशारदाय ।  
पराय वाग्भूषणभूषिताय नमो दयानन्दगुरुवराय ॥ ६ ॥

— Swamini Vidyananda Saraswati  
Arsha Parampara, Madurai

## Bhu Samadhi of Pujya Swamiji

**DIVINE MOMENTS :** Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati came back from the hospital to Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh on September 23, 2015 around noon. All the Swamis, Swaminis, students and devotees did pranams to Pujya Swamiji.

In a divine and peaceful atmosphere, Gajendra moksha, Gita 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> chapters, Vishnu sahasranama and Om Namashivayamaha mantra were chanted, by Swamiji's disciples. As the chanting was on, it looked as though Pujya Swamiji was in meditation.

Swamiji attained mahasamadhi at 10.17 p.m. It was Pujya Swamiji's sankalpa, that he attained mahasamadhi in Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh on the banks of river Ganga. His sankalpa fructified and he attained vidhehamukti in a peaceful, beautiful and dignified manner, amidst the holy chanting.

**PUBLIC HOMAGE :** After that Pujya Swamiji's sacred body was kept in the lecture hall in a glass cabin with ice slabs until the early morning of September 25, 2015. In a holy atmosphere of Vedic chanting, Swamis, Swaminis, students and devotees, dignitaries paid their respects to Pujya Swamiji. Common citizens and children of Rishikesh stood in long serpentine queue even past midnight to offer their homage. Pujya Swamiji has touched the hearts of not only the Scholars but the common man too.

**FINAL RITUALS :** On September 25, 2015 around 8 a.m., Pujya Swamiji's sacred body was taken from the lecture hall in a procession with ringing of bell, blowing of conch and holy chants to a place between



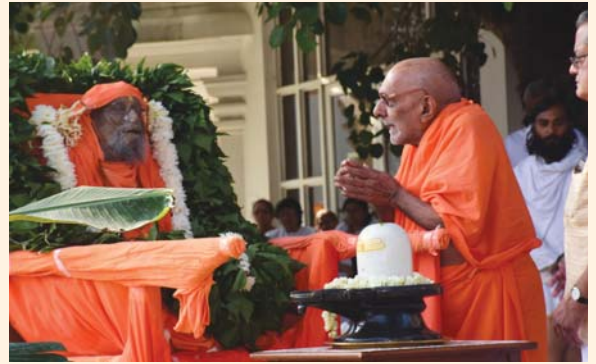
**In Meditative Posture**

the lecture hall and the Gangadhareshwarar temple on the banks of river Ganga near the aswatha tree. A shivalinga was placed nearby.

**ABHISEKA :** As per yati aaradhana shodasa-upacara puja was done to Swamiji's sacred body and the Shivalinga simultaneously. The solemn ritual was performed by Swami Suddhananda assisted by Swami Brahmavidyananda, Swami Santatmananda and other Swamis, with the guidance of Jambhunata Ganapatikal. Abiseka for Shivalinga and samprokshana for Pujya Swamiji's sacred body with ekaadasarudra chanted jal, Ganga jal and Gangadareswara abishekajal was done, followed by other shodasa puja



**Bhu samadhi ceremony**



**Maha-samadhi - reverence to Guru**



**Bhu-Samdhi Preparation**



**Siva linga at adhishtanam**



**Ritviks Chanting**



**Shodasa Upacara Pooja 2**



**Maha-samadhi with Ganges  
at back-ground**



**Adhishtanam**

vidhi, including astotra-archana. Swami Paramarthananda led the chanting.

**BHU SAMADHI :** With holy chants and mangala dwani, Pujya Swamiji's sacred body facing river Ganga was lowered onto a platform inside a pit. The exact place of Swamiji's sacred body was marked by extending a rod from inside the pit up to the ground level. With the continuation of chanting of mantras, vibuti (holy ash), turmeric and sandal were offered, first by Swami Suddhananda and later by Sadhus and other devotees. The holy samadhi was filled up with sacks of salt, vibuti, sand, sandal, turmeric, cow dung and charcoal. The ceremony ended around 10.30 a.m.

**ADHISHTANAM :** Pujya Swamiji's Samadhi and the Siva linga are kept facing river Ganga in Swami Dayananda Asram, Rishikesh. In future a small shrine will be built in that location and will be called as 'adhishtanam'.

**THE WISDOM LIGHT IS ALIVE :** Although Pujya Swamiji is not amidst us in flesh and blood, but he continues to exist in the form of his teachings, and the legacy of disciple-teachers and through the various institutions established by him. The teaching is not separate from the Teacher. "All that is here is Isvara" is the main teaching of Swamiji and hence this teaching is also Ishwara. Swamiji is Ishwara.

*Report by N. Avinashilingam*

## Pujya Swami Dayananda Sarawati

The Editorial team is working on the significance of each word – Pujya , Swami, Daya-Ananda , and Saraswati . Besides deriving the respective word from its Sanskrit root - धातु - , its different meaning as per Sanskrit dictionary, its occurrence in Upanishad and or Gita will also be cited.

How these words fully describe Swamiji will be elaborated , including anecdotes etc., For example the word PujyaH means 'most deservful for worshipping, venerable, adoring' etc. Swamiji's contribution to the whole humanity in terms of not only unfolding the vision of Sastra but also in the propagation of Sanatanadharma, instituting various Social organisations etc are being highlighted which deserves for his adoration.

Simialrly we are working on other words too. **With regard to Swami and daya especially, we are sure there will be very many intimate experinces by individuals with Swamiji. If readers can share their experiences, we will be happy to add them in the forth-coming article appropriately.**

Please write, preferably in Word format not exceeding half-page and send us

to any of the following:

By e-mail : [avgnl2014@gmail.com](mailto:avgnl2014@gmail.com)

By post : Editor, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam,  
Anaikatti Post, Coimbatore 641 108

## Shodasi at Anaikatti



**Praaceena Aadheenams**

In memory of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a shodasi (16<sup>th</sup> day ceremony) was organized at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti on October 8, 2015. On this occasion Heads/ representatives of Thiruvavaduthurai Aadheenam, Thirupananthal Kasi Mutt, Dharmapuram Aadheenam, Koviloor Mutt, Perur Mutt, Siravai Mutt, Kamakshipuram Aadheenam, Sencheri Thirunavukarasu Nandavana Mutt, Mayilam Ponampuram Aadheenam, Mounaguru Mutt Chidambaram, Sri Appar Swamigal Mutt, Pillayar Petham, Arunai Annamalayar Thiru Mutt, Sri Vaarahi Mantralayam, Sri Agastyar Asramam, Sri Vageesa Mutt Avinashi and Sri Lalithambikai Peetam attended and blessed the devotees.

Hymns from Thirumurai were rendered by eminent oduvars. Puja and dakshina were offered to the 16 sadhus followed by bhandara (lunch)



**Bandara**



**Bandara**



**Oduvars**

On Oct 9, 2015, 35 oduvars from Thirumurai Seva Maiyam, Tamil Nadu chanted Thirumurai from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in memory of Pujya Swamiji.

*Report by N. Avinashilingam*



**Aadheenam's  
speeches**



**Upacara to  
Aadheenams**



**Aadheenams at Swamiji's  
Kutia**

## Shodasi at Rishikesh

**SHODASI :** Shodasi or 16<sup>th</sup> day ceremony of Pujya Swami Dayanananda Saraswati's maha Samadhi was observed at Swami Dayananda Asram, Rishikesh on October 8, 2015.

**BHU SAMADHI STHALA :** The place where bhu Samadhi is situated within the Ashram on the banks of river Ganga was beautifully decorated with flower pandal by Florist from Chennai. The devotees were awe struck with the beautiful flower arrangement made on the bhu Samadhi.

**HONOURING MAHATMAS :** Seventeen Maha mandaleshwars and Mandaleshwars from Rishikesh and Haridwar participated in the ceremony. They first offered floral tribute to Pujya Swamiji's bhu Samadhi. Puja was done to the Maha mandaleshwars and Mandaleshwars. They were honoured with memorable gifts and Guru dakshina. Bhandara was first offered to these Mahatmas.

**SADHU BHANDARA :** After that Sadhu bhandara was offered in four batches. More

than 3,000 Sadhus were offered bhandara and dakshina. Sadhus came from Rishikesh and Haridwar. It was a great sight to see ochre clad Sadhus moving in and moving out of the Ashram in such great numbers.

**GENERAL BHANDARA :** On October 9, 2015, the next day general bhandara was offered to citizens of Rishikesh. More than 6,000 people took part in the general bhandara.

**FITTING SHODASI :** Everything about the shodasi was fitting the magnanimity of Pujya Swamiji. The gifts and Guru dakshina offered to the Maha mandaleshwars and Mandaleshwars were very generous. The number of Sadhus who were offered bhandara and dakshina was more than 3,000. The number of Rishikesh citizens who were offered bhandara was more than 6,000. Even after maha Samadhi, Pujya Swamiji continues to be a great contributor.

*Report by  
N. Avinashilingam*



**Mahamandaleshwars offering tribute**



**Prayers at the decorated Samdhi-sthala**



**Mahamandaleswars being honoured**



**Sadhu-vrnda in front of the Samadhi-sthala**



**Samashti Bhandara view**



**Manasa Smaraami Sadgurus**



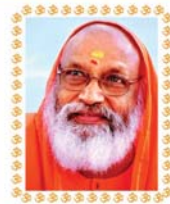
## Shodasi at Manjakudi



**Sadhu Upacaram**



**Sadhu Vandanam**



**Shodasi Pooja and Abhisheka is scheduled at Manjakkudi, the Janma Bhoomi of Pujya Swamiji on Thursday, October 8th at 8.00 a.m.**

Swami Dayananda Educational Trust celebrates the Shodashi Bhandara on Thursday 8 October 2015, the 16th day of Pujya Swamiji's Maha Samadhi. Pujya Swamiji attained Maha Samadhi on 23.09.2015 at Rishikesh.

The Shodashi Bhandara will be offered to 16 Sadhus. They will be ceremonially honoured and samaradhana offered.

We deem it a great honour to invite sadhus & devotees to participate in the Shodashi of Pujya Sri Swamiji at his Janma Bhoomi and receive his blessings.



**SWAMI DAYANANDA EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

Manjakkudi – 612 610,  
Tiruvallur Dt.

## Shodasi at Chennai



Sw Paramarthananda's talk



## Shodasi at Saylorsburg



## Adhishtanam - Puja



The Bhu-samadhi where Pujya Swamiji's sacred body was placed is now considered as holy place like any other shrine or temple. Immediately after the bhu-samadhi rituals, every day puja, including ashtotram, to Swamiji's photo placed near the Samadhi, is done morning and evening subsequent to the puja to Narmadheshwarer. The Bhu-samadhi where Pujya Swamiji's sacred body was placed is now considered as holy place like any other shrine or temple.

## Adhishtanam - Decoration



Various floral arrangements were done on the adhishtanam every day.

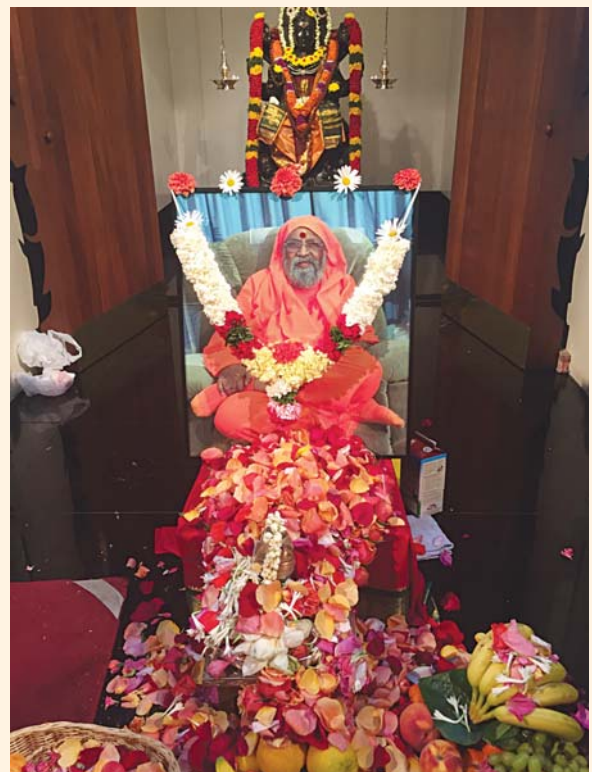
## Shraddhanjali to Pujya Swamiji at Bhavan

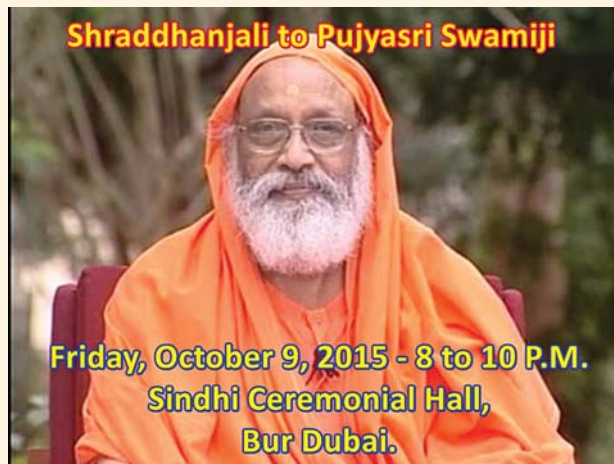
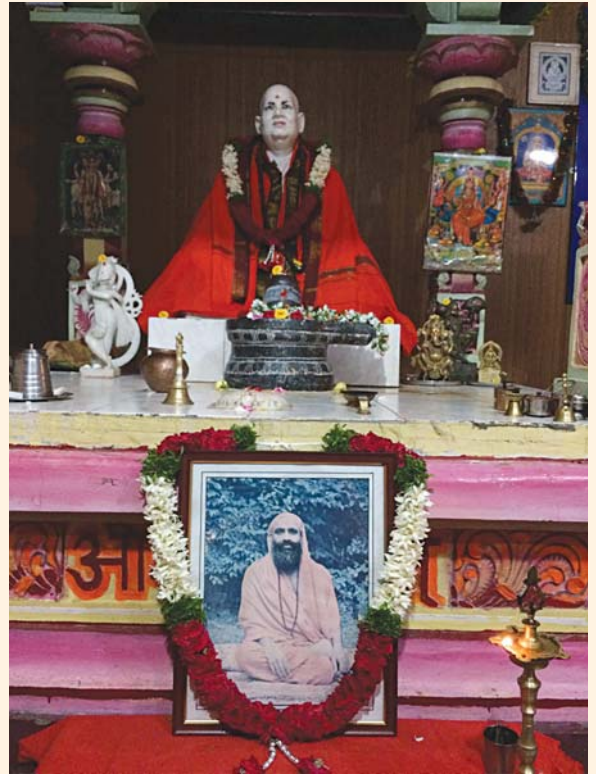
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore Kendra organized a reverential homage to Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati on October 4, 2015 in the evening.

Krishnaraj Vanavarayar, Swami Shankaranandaji, Smt.Sunitha Santharam, Sri Ravi Sam, Sri Krishnan and Sri Gurumurti spoke



## Shraddhanjali at various places





## Swami Dayananda – A Jewish Appreciation

**Alon Goshen-Gottstein**

Founder and Director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute.

Acknowledged as one of the world's leading figures in interreligious dialogue.



India has just lost one of its most important Hindu leaders, Swami Dayananda Saraswati. The media referred to him by appeal to his most celebrated student, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi. But Dayananda did not need Modi to be known in India, and globally. I recall how impressed I was with a full page ad on some airline magazine in India announcing Dayananda's teaching over the course of several days. In India it seems natural to sell more than cosmetics on airplanes.

Maybe the best way to consider Dayananda is in light of the keyword unity. He was first and foremost a teacher of Divine Unity. He was arguably the most significant present day exponent of the unitive philosophical and mystical system called Advaita Vedanta, that proclaims the full unity of all being, and obviously the full

unity of God, encompassing the transcendent and immanent fields. He was also a man who sought to unite Hinduism, arguably the world's most fragmented, diverse and hard to define religion. By creating a council of all the major religious leaders and heads of various sects, he sought to give Hinduism a united voice, identity and representation. And his unitive vision went beyond Hinduism to all religions, that he recognized as valid pathways to God, which in turn led him to become one of India's foremost leaders in interreligious dialogue.

This leads me to consider Swami Dayananda as a pioneer of Hindu-Jewish relations. Dayananda was the driving force behind the most important Jewish-Hindu encounter ever. Swami Dayananda, through the council of Hindu leaders, held two high profile summits with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish leaders and scholars. These summits are seen by many as a breakthrough in Hindu-Jewish relations, in a sense establishing "spiritual-diplomatic" relations between them. What drove Dayanandaji to invite the Chief Rabbi of Israel to Delhi and to come himself to Jerusalem, with a significant delegation of Hindu religious leaders? Vision, concern and pain.

Let me begin with the pain. I would like to share two different conversations I had with Dayananda, both of which are relevant to the Jewish-Hindu summits he initiated. The first took place in Montreal, in advance



of the first summit of Hindu-Jewish leaders. Dayananda was in Montreal for a large conference where he shared his pain about how Christians are converting Hindus. Conversion is a nation-wide problem in India, and a very much unresolved one, as it continues to feed violence on the ground. Dayananda carried the pain and concern for Hindu identity that he felt is being undermined by missionaries using inappropriate missionary tactics. His unitive vision and his recognition of the validity of all faiths did not detract from the problem and the enormous pain with which I was confronted. As a Jew I was sympathetic. And as a savvy international leader, Dayananda knew he needed allies, and he recognized Jews share his sentiment. He therefore sought to cultivate relations with Jewish leadership in combating Christian missionaries. The declaration issued during the first summit includes this as one of its messages:

“Neither [Hindus nor Jews] seek to proselytize, nor undermine or replace in any way the religious identities of other faith communities. They expect other communities to respect their religious identities and commitments, and condemn all activities that go against the sanctity of this mutual respect.”

Dayananda carried a second pain, that of being misunderstood. I recall another conversation with him, this one in his

Ashram in his Rishikesh, where he passed away a couple of days ago. Dayananda was beside himself at the accusation that he was an idol worshipper. “Me an idol worshipper?” He addressed to me his frustration at Jewish authorities who could not see beyond the externals of Hindu worship to the spiritual reality that he of all people, as India’s foremost teacher of Vedanta, was well aware of and that informed his spiritual horizons. Dayananda had a deep need to clear up what he considered a fundamental misperception of Hinduism, on the part of Jews. This was the second most important goal of the summits. Reading the transcripts of the summits one realizes that assembled rabbis heard for the first time that Hinduism was not primitive idolatry and that Hindus worship the one Supreme Being, the same one worshipped by Jews. This recognition stood at the top of the both declarations and was considered by Dayananda as their greatest achievement.

Following the meeting, Dayananda gave an interview to the New Indian Express, where he stated:

The Jerusalem meet concluded with a landmark declaration that Hindus worship ‘one supreme being’ and are not really idolatrous. The implications of this are profound in content and far-reaching in effect. Judaism was born of the complete repudiation of idol-worship and the



rabbinic literature abounds with denunciation of idolatry in an entire tractate of the Talmud devoted to this.

The importance of this issue in the Jewish and other Abrahamic traditions cannot be overstated. Since its first encounter with these religions, due to their incomplete understanding of its Sastras, Hinduism has been perceived by them as idolatrous and promoting many gods, says Swami Dayananda Saraswathi.

The Hindus have, for centuries, experienced the extremely violent consequences of this wrong perception. The historic declaration made at the Hindu-Jewish Summit at Jerusalem on 18 February, 2008 sets at rest the wrong notion that Hinduism is idolatrous.

The declaration reads: 'It is recognized that one supreme being in its formless and manifest aspects has been worshipped by Hindus over the millennia. The Hindu relates to only the one supreme being when he / she prays to a particular manifestation. This does not mean that Hindus worship 'gods' and 'idols'.

The Jewish leaders, in so many words, owned their perception of the Hindu tradition as erroneous and came up with the declaration which the Hindu delegation could happily accept. This establishes that honest and bold dialogue can completely reverse wrong views and erroneous perceptions held over millennia. It emphasizes that leaders of every religion need to be informed about the basics, vision

and beliefs of other religious traditions, says Swami Dayananda Saraswathi.

If one thinks about it, this is a remarkable moment. It is remarkable because Jews and Hindus have made significant progress in their mutual understanding. In my soon to be released *The Jewish Encounter with Hinduism* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015) I query whether Dayananda was over-optimistic in his reading of the summits' achievements and whether indeed the issue of idolatry is off the table once and for all. But that does not detract from the fact that for the first time ever a theological conversation took place between Jewish and Hindu leaders, and that its outcome was transformative. It is also a remarkable moment in terms of process, a fact underlined by Dayananda himself. Dayananda was able to channel his pain into constructive action. He did not simply complain about Hinduism being misunderstood. He took steps to make it better understood. And in this he appealed to the procedure of dialogue as the way forward in clearing up misunderstandings. This is itself a remarkable achievement.

Swami Dayananda passed away on the eve of the Sukkot festival, a time imagined by the Prophet Zachariaiah as one of a pilgrimage of all nations to Jerusalem. Passing away on the eve of Sukkot allows us to consider Dayananda, and all the Hindus he represents, as models for what the gentiles' visit to Jerusalem might be all about. It is certainly not missionary. But nor is it simply coming to Jerusalem to recognize the God or the truth of Judaism. Dayananda came to Jerusalem to increase understanding and the procedure he undertook was that of dialogue. When we think of the seventy nations this Sukkot, we are invited to consider not only what they will receive by coming to Jerusalem, but also what we might receive by their presence. Our experience of Sukkot may be deepened when we realize that receiving guests in our Sukka is an invitation to dialogue.

## In Memoriam of Swami Dayananda's Mahasamadhi

Namaste. I have just received news that Swami Dayananda Saraswati Ji of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam has attained Mahasamadhi tonight (according to Bharatiya time) at his Rishikesh Ashram on the banks of mother Ganga. It was his desire to leave his body near Ganga Ji.

Those who came in contact with him would readily agree that he was a teacher par excellence of Vedanta. He established Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Saylorsburg, PA in early eighties and made it into a gigantic institution to distribute knowledge/Gyan of Vedic traditions in a true Gurukul style.

I had known that Swamiji was at his Arsha Vidya Gurukulam on August 25th of this year, when he left for Bharat in an air ambulance. Though he was on a stretcher and had to labor to speak, he spoke at a length; his words were peppered with his usual humor and wit. In that halting message, he had expressed a desire to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi (himself a spiritual aspirant) before giving up his body. As soon as Swamiji reached Bharat, Modiji had a Skype conversation with him. At Modiji's request, Swamiji agreed to take two more treatments of dialysis and as God would have wished, on September 11th, Modiji made a trip to Rishikesh and met Pujya Swamiji. Swamiji blessed Modiji, which is for the good of the nation.

In my personal life, he was at a "thinkers meet" in Hyderabad, India back in 1999, which was a gathering of many of the important writers on Hinduism and Vedic culture, primarily those of India, but also a number of us western writers and scholars were there. Swamiji was a key proponent for the idea of starting an

organization for western writers to work together, which became the Vedic Friends Association, for bringing western teachers, writers and students to work cooperatively to help spread Vedic culture to as many other westerners as possible. We are still working in the Vedic Friends Association, a small group, but with continued focus to keep our work of spreading Vedic dharma going.

I remember when some of us westerners were in Guahati, Assam for a conference on preserving the traditions of the indigenous tribes in Northeast India back in the year 2000. I shared the stage with him as one of the speakers there. Later, we attended a cultural program wherein the different tribes would perform traditional dances while wearing the customary outfits. I was sitting near the front in between Swamiji and Sheshadri, one of the elder RSS men. They were both taking turns explaining to me what each of the tribal dances meant. I remember thinking I had the best seat in the house, watching the traditional dances, and these two great men were explaining everything to me.

At another conference in the northeastern India, I remember he had lunch with some of us westerners and we would talk and joke about the various ways that would be effective in spreading Vedic dharma. He always had ideas, and he was never one to be intimidated by what is now called "political correctness". He called things as he saw them, and spoke boldly about the needs of the hour to protect Vedic dharma, especially against the conversion tactics of some religions in the region. He also seemed to appreciate that same spirit of

boldness that some of us westerners exhibited.

He knew I was a Krishna bhakta, a disciple of A. C. Bhaktivedanta, but, like me, he was quite non-sectarian when it came to dealing with others on the path of Vedic Dharma. In fact, he formed the Acharya Sabha, an organization made of the top 200 spiritual leaders of all the important Vedic organizations across India, composed of all kinds of lineages and schools of thought. I thought this was one of the best ideas he had. In that organization they would work together on a common basis to deal with the challenges to preserve and protect Vedic Dharma, whether it was from conversion tactics, challenges from the government, and so on. They meet every year. In fact, I had one Vaishnava Swami friend call me one time to thank me for letting him attend one annual meeting. I asked how did I do that. He said that he went to it and said that I was his friend, and based on my name alone, they let him inside to attend it.

I also remember one of the first conferences the Vedic Friends Association had at his Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, in which he would let us meet there and use his facilities for free. Once he was going to speak on meditation, and he called for me, and would not start his talk until I was there. Once I sat down near him, only then did he start to speak about the importance of meditation, how he performed his meditation, and then chanted several mantras, including the Hare Krishna mantra, as we sat in his upstairs room.

One of the most important memories was nearly 14 years ago when we had another small conference at his ashrama in Saylorsburg, and my house in Detroit had just been burglarized, and I had lost my computer and several other things that were important to me in doing my writing and other Dharmic work. I mentioned that it may take some time to remain in contact with everyone at the conference since I no longer have a computer, and it may take

some time for me to get the money to get another one. Within minutes, he went around the room and did a fundraiser for me and raised nearly \$3000, plus one of the volunteers at the ashrama said he could give me one of their computers, and Swamiji also made arrangements to send me a monthly stipend. After that I had a computer, and funds to pick up and continue my work of writing and so on. He simply liked the work I did and the intentions I had. That stipend was sent to me every month from his own organization and kept my rent paid for five years so I could work and write without that worry. No one had ever shown me that kind of support before.

He was greatly influential, and was well-known all across India. In fact, he had written and signed a letter of reference for me, stating that I was a sincere Hindu and should be treated with the respect that I deserve. That way when I would go to certain temples in India, I could show that letter to get in, if they were not allowing certain people inside. So one time when I went to the Meenakshi temple, the priests would not allow me into the sanctums because of being white-skinned. So I showed the management that letter from Swamiji, and after they had some discussion about it, they arranged one of their priests to take us into all of the sanctums and do pujas, taking us to the head of the long lines of India pilgrims, who were watching and wondering why I and a friend of mine got to go to the head of the lines while everyone else had to wait. It was like we were shown special privileges that even the locals did not receive. I still have that letter.

For these reasons Swami Dayananda Sarasvati will always have a place in my heart and a special regard from me, and I will always honor what special attention he gave me, and pray for his well-being.

*Jai Sri Krishna,  
Stephen Knapp (Sri Nandanandana dasa)*

## Modi's Tribute

**New York:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has mourned the death of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, whom he considered as his guru.

"Swami Dayananda Saraswati ji's demise is a personal loss. I pray that his soul attains eternal peace," Modi wrote on Twitter, soon after he landed in New York today.

"My thoughts are with the countless people inspired by Dayananda Saraswati ji. He was a powerhouse of knowledge, spirituality & service," Modi said.



## **Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1930 - 2015)**

### **Published on Newyork Times**

### **Obituary**

Swami Dayananda Saraswati (Arsha Vidya), an internationally known Hindu monk, a great visionary, an eminent and traditional teacher of Vedanta (the timeless religious, spiritual and core philosophy from India), and a brilliant thinker and writer attained mahasamadhi (cessation of bodily existence) on September 23, 2015 in Rishikesh, India.

Swami Dayananda established traditional Vedanta teaching centers carrying the banner 'Arsha Vidya' (meaning "knowledge of the Rishis") including three in India and one in Saylorsburg, PA (<http://www.arshavidya.org/>). He was also the founder of All India Movement for Seva (or Service) (<http://www.aimforseva.org/>), a unique social enterprise that brings education and healthcare to the children living in the rural areas of India through student homes, schools, and clinics, totally free of cost. Swami Dayananda worked tirelessly over several decades to promote multiple inter-religious dialogues, and was an author and contributor to many Joint Declarations, with Jewish and Buddhist leaders for example. Swami Dayananda's teachings, lectures and writings have been published in more than 60 titles in English, and some of them have been translated to other languages. A popular book that has been translated to both Spanish and French is "The Value of Values." It is particularly popular among youth as it discusses the commonly sensed human values, an appreciation of which is the most important ingredient for harmony among religions, nations and cultures. Swami Dayananda's commitment to religious harmony made him a revered spiritual leader across a wide spectrum of traditions around the world. The final obsequies of Swami Dayananda, as per the Hindu tradition for a monk, were performed in the presence of thousands of disciples, religious leaders, admirers and the general public.

## Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1930-2015)

### Anantanand Rambachan



Dr. Anantanand Rambachan is Professor of Religion at Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, USA. His books include, 'Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Sankara 'The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Authority of the Vedas', 'The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity' and 'A Hindu Theology of Liberation: Not-Two is Not One'

**Few teachers have fulfilled their obligations to their tradition as Swami Dayananda Saraswati did. He has left our world richer with teachers.**

In 1973, after graduating from the University of the West Indies, I made a long journey from my home in Trinidad to study at the Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, the *asrama* in Mumbai, India, founded by Swami Chinmayananda (1916-1993). This was my first visit to India, the birthplace of my Hindu ancestors. It was a time when few from my country traveled to India.

I was a teenager when Swami Chinmayananda first visited Trinidad in 1965 and I avidly read his available writings. In 1969, I wrote to him for permission to join his *asrama*. His sage advice, after rebuking me for my undated letter, was to complete my college education before coming to Sandeepany. In 1973, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya launched its first intensive multi-year course of study in Vedanta and Sanskrit. By then, I had fulfilled Swamiji's advice and I was accepted as his student.

Mumbai was drenched in monsoon rains when I made my way from the airport to Sandeepany. I was introduced to Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who I learned was the principal *acarya* and the designer of the course of study that I came to pursue.

When I arrived at Sandeepany, I discovered that the course had already started. Swamiji, in fact, had completed his teaching of one of the foundational texts, Sankara's *Tattvabodha*. *Tattvabodha* offers concise definitions of the major terms and concepts of Vedanta and is a necessary preliminary to further study. Realizing that I would be at a learning disadvantage for his Upanishad classes, Swamiji offered to teach the text again and did so in intimate sessions in his *kutir*. Though he had recently completed the text, his instruction was patient and thorough. These were features of his teaching that never wavered. There were never signs of impatience or haste.

This was my first and indelible experience of the one who would become the most

influential teacher in my life. For the next three years, with rare breaks, I sat at his feet studying the Upanisads and the Bhagavatgita with the commentaries of Sankara.

When Swamiji was ready to begin the teaching of the Bhagavatgita, he wanted a location where the ancient *rishis* themselves taught and where their memories were still alive. He took us all to Purana Jhadi in Rishikesh. There was no accommodation at Purana Jhadi. Swamiji had a tiny one-room cottage, and so we stayed in the spartan rooms of Andhra Ashram. On early mornings and late afternoons, we sat in the open on the banks of the Ganga, breathing the cool air and listening to his meticulous verse by verse exposition of the Bhagavatgita. The Ganga roared unceasingly in the background and Swamiji often spoke of it as symbolizing the *sampradaya* or flow of knowledge. Swamiji delighted in the simple and unencumbered ascetic setting of Purana Jhadi. It seemed a perfect setting, singing Ganga and silent Himalaya, for Swamiji to do what he loved beyond all else – teach. It does not surprise that Swamiji chose Rishikesh, a sacred space where he lived as both student and teacher, to be the site of his *mahasamdhi*.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati was an abundantly gifted human being and these gifts found fruitful expression in a variety of achievements and initiatives. A proper and detailed assessment of his legacy is a necessary task for scholars of religion in the future. For his students across the world, however, the heart of this legacy is not in dispute. They have discovered it in his extraordinary gifts as a teacher of Vedanta; this is the image that is lovingly and gratefully alive in their hearts.

At the heart of Swamiji's passion and creativity as a teacher was his foundational commitment to the Veda (*sruti*) as a source of valid knowledge (*pramana*). The

understanding of the Veda as a *pramana*, though central to the methodology of the classical teacher, Sankara, did not come easy to Swamiji. He spoke often to us of his early challenges as a student of Vedanta before he understood the Veda as a *pramana*. His students, he would say, "do not know the magnitude of the discovery that the Veda is a *pramana*. They did not suffer as I did."

He attributed his transformative understanding to the teaching of a Telugu-speaking *sanyasin*, Swami Pranavananda. Through the teaching of Swami Pranavananda, Swamiji came to see Vedanta as a direct means of knowledge for knowing the truth of oneself, even as the eyes serve as the instrument for the knowledge of forms and colors. "That was enough for me," said Swamiji. "I never looked back. I had already studied the *Upanisads – Vedantah*. So, what was needed was only to rearrange – to look at the *Upanisads*, the whole teaching in the light of *Pramanam*"

Any description of Swamiji's skillful teaching is incomplete without grasping this fact. This is where he always started his unfolding of the Vedanta vision. The human problem, as Swamiji tirelessly taught, is one of incorrect understanding of the nature of oneself that is full and whole, but erroneously taken to be incomplete and lacking. Ignorance is dispelled only by knowledge and knowledge must be derived from a valid source.

The Veda- *pramana* consists of words. The potential of these words to dispel ignorance depends on their handling by a skillful teacher. Swamiji brought to his teaching a deep understanding of the possibilities and limits of language. He exercised meticulous care in his choice of words and used these with marvelous dexterity and deftness to instruct about that, "from whom all words, along with the mind, turn back having failed to grasp." (Taittiriya Upanisad). He knew well the dangers of linguistic

indiscipline and imprecision in speaking of *brahman* and sought always to use words with caution, and consistency. He was fresh and chaste in his teaching. Words can liberate and words can imprison; he tapped deftly into the liberating potential of the words of the Upanisads, and taught his students to do the same.

As a teacher, Swamiji's attention was unwaveringly centered on the end-purpose of his teaching- the freedom of the student sitting at his feet. He made *moksa*, an end that is too-often clothed in mystery and made to seem remote and difficult, real and accessible. He universalized the human problem as a sense of inadequacy and incompleteness, making it one that is validated in the experience of every human being. He presented *moksa* as freedom from self-inadequacy that is attained through understanding a teaching that dispels ignorance. He enabled us to see that the full being we want to become is immediately and always available. The presentation of the human problem and its resolution in these terms means that the Vedanta *pramana* deals with a recognizable human issue. As a teacher, Swamiji clearly wanted to present the Vedanta *pramana* in a manner that overcomes cultural or religious alienation and to make it accessible and relevant to a recognizable problem. I recall that in every class, at some point or the other, he imparted the vision of Vedanta in its entirety. To transmit the vision of the whole in this manner is no small accomplishment for a teacher, and Swamiji always did it with an irresistible relevance, charm and intimacy.

One of the eloquent statements about Swamiji's impact and effectiveness as a teacher is his ability to nurture and produce capable teachers. He understood himself as belonging to an ancient lineage (*sampradaya*) of teachers and students. This lineage had both a teaching to transmit as well as a distinctive methodology to ensure proper

transmission and continuity. He fulfilled his indebtedness to this tradition through his own earnest study, his commitment to teaching, and his founding of the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam as a place of teaching and learning. Few teachers have fulfilled their obligations to their tradition as Swamiji did. He has left our world richer with teachers, monastic and lay, who will contribute to the vitality of this tradition and produce new teachers.

Swamiji's teaching was essentially an invitation to inquire. One cannot prove that the Vedanta, as a valid source of knowledge, works unless one is willing to give it a try by exposing oneself to a qualified teacher. As a teacher, he never demanded that his students assent to anything *apriori*. All he asked for was a willingness to try the teaching with an open mind. One must be willing to suspend judgments about the *pramana* until it is given an opportunity to prove itself.

When I visited Swamiji for the last time in December 2014, forty-one years after we first met, his health was failing and he was frail in body. Each evening, however, a few of us sat. Between periods of listening, we were around him in the lecture hall to listen to the transcript of his lectures on Taittiriya Upanisad. We would support him to exercise by walking around the room. He was attentive to each word, occasionally correcting the transcript, ensuring that his meaning was accurately communicated.

His eyes and face lit up whenever a passage from the commentary of Sankara was cited. He delighted in the clarity and logic of the argument. Commitment to the Veda-*pramana* was the beginning and end of his self-understanding as a teacher.

One night, at the end of the session, he turned to me and spoke words that I will never forget, "*Sastra pramana* does work."

*Jaya Gurudeva*

# Swami Dayananda, The Patriot Saint

## By S Gurumurthy

Published in Indian Express on 25th September 2015

Swami Dayananda Saraswati — a master exponent of the inclusive Hindu philosophy who declared there was not 'ONE GOD,' but 'ONLY GOD,' a teacher of Vedanta who created hundreds of teachers to continue the ancient Indian tradition, a great organiser who founded the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha as the representative body of unorganised Hindu religious traditions, a philosopher who harmonised and validated, from the Hindu perspective of theo-diversity, all forms of worship from paganism to monism, an intellectual who re-articulated and established that religious conversion, regarded as the right of evangelist religions, is itself violence, and finally a patriot saint who, like Maharishi Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda did, saw, in the ancient nation of India, the very manifestation of all that he had learnt and taught — is no more. Indeed he was the latest incarnation in the tradition of nationalist saints of India.

Endowed with unparalleled intellectual skills and unlimited knowledge base, Dayananda first made it a mission of his life to teach and did take Vedanta to a vast elite audience in India and outside, which would otherwise have been half-westernised in world view and as much Christianised culturally. He aligned Vedanta to India as a national entity and cultural phenomenon and to Indians as the chosen people entrusted with the sacred duty to live, sustain and protect it not only for them but also for the good of the world. In his exposition, Vedanta was not just a philosophy but it found expression in the culture and life of India founded on the idea of dharma — in its arts and music, literature and sculpture, society and family, and in the Indian traditional respect for elders, teachers

and women and ultimately in the reverence for this nation itself as sacred and in the love of the entire creation, both animate and inanimate. Starting off as student and disciple of the redoubtable Swami Chinmayananda, the originator of the contemporary school of exposition of Vedanta, Dayananda Saraswati rapidly grew up as an accomplished scholar and unparalleled teacher.

After having worked for decades and succeeded in his mission to teach and create teachers of Vedanta, he turned his attention to some critical issues of contemporary importance which would have long-term and adverse implications for the very purpose and soul of this ancient nation. With this new turn, in the late 1990s a paradigm shift took place in his entire course of thought and action and this led to his founding of the Dharma Rakshana Samiti in Chennai in 1999. It was in that unique event, a confluence of some highly regarded saints, spiritualists, and intellectuals, that Swami Dayananda made one of his most memorable speeches where he declared that the very concept of religious conversion itself was violence — a spiritual, mental and cultural violence. This redefined the very notion of conversion which till then had some acceptability among non-Gandhian secularists as a right of religions — which in effect meant only the proselytising religions — to convert others to their faith. Gandhiji's contempt for religious conversion is too well-known for the secularists to appropriate Mahatma Gandhi to support conversion as integral secularism. This is amongst the greatest contributions of Swami Dayananda to global inter-religious discourse. The redefinition of religious conversion as violence robbed the concept of conversion of

benignity and exposed its malignant character.

In 1999 when the then Pope visited India, Swami Dayananda constituted and led a group of multi-religious scholars and intellectuals and welcomed but asked him to declare that he was happy to visit a nation which has respected all faiths and that he also respected all faiths. But the Pope preferred not to accept Swami Dayananda's suggestion. However, with his unmatched intellectual prowess Swami Dayananda took the battle against conversion in world fora. He proposed self-discipline among faiths in the Millennium summit of the United Nations in the year 2000, calling upon religions to respect each other, not to abuse one another and not to convert the faithfuls of other religions by force or by inducement to one's fold.

There was consensus on his view but finally the proselytising faiths did not agree and the Millennium harmony proposal therefore did not succeed. But it took just eight more years for Swami Dayananda to convince the world religious leaders of the need for trans-religious self-regulation.

In the human rights declaration of world religious leaders in Amsterdam on December 10, 2008 on the 60th anniversary of the UN Human Rights Declaration, all world religious leaders, including the proselytising faiths, accepted the Dayananda approach — namely that religions should mutually respect and accept each other, that they should not abuse or trivialise one another's faiths or symbols, that they should recognise the right of a person to be in the religion of his birth, and that there should be no conversion by force or by inducement — and signed the historic declaration. It is the substance of the Amsterdam declaration which Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted as the approach of his government to different faiths when he addressed the Christian religious meet in Delhi to celebrate the canonisation of saints from Kerala.

In this period from 1999 to 2008, Swami Dayananda undertook some far-reaching initiatives, which included the constitution of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha — one of his greatest achievements and equally a great contribution to the Indian civilisation. The Acharya Sabha has given the diverse and unorganised Hindu religions, which had long suffered disadvantage relative to the organised and proselytising faiths, a platform to come together as Dharma religions and participate in the global discourse. Till then, any secularist masquerading as a religious person would sign on the dotted line on behalf of Hinduism in the global fora.

His next big move was to bring together elders of all indigenous faiths — whether from South America or North America, Africa or Europe — at Delhi. Swami Dayananda declared that all faiths are sacred and valid and no faith can and should be allowed to claim to be superior to other faiths. He articulated religious diversity, which is the strongest point of Hinduism, in the most acceptable, rational and logical manner and challenged and debunked the claim that some faiths are only true faiths and others false faiths, which, he argued, is the cause for the widespread hate and violence today.

The great successes of this great sanyasi, moulded in the ancient traditions of India, is not, however, as well-known as he himself was. That also demonstrated the high point of his personality — humility. Maharishi Aurobindo said that the greatest achievements have been least noisy. This aptly applied to Swami Dayananda's work and life. In his demise, the Hindu philosophy has lost its greatest exponent of recent times, Hindu religion one of its staunchest defenders, and the nation a great patriot saint.

**The author is a commentator on political, economic and cultural affairs.**

**E-mail: [guru@gurumurthy.net](mailto:guru@gurumurthy.net)**

## A sage for all ages

By T R Jawahar

Thursday, 24th September 2015)

In the passing away of Swami Dayananda Saraswati the nation has lost a revered Guru, who saw himself as a philosopher-teacher (as opposed to a *mada adhipathi*). This distinction is important to understand the great Guru and put his immeasurable contributions in proper perspective. For *Talk Media, News Today* and *Maalai Sudar* too, the death of this kind soul is a sad event as he had been an important guiding spirit to it. Personally too, it is a hour of huge sorrow for me, as I had interacted and travelled extensively with the Pujya Swamiji. I had interviewed him on many occasions over the last decade or so. Profuse, prolific and profound, the Swamiji left a lasting impact on me as I had the opportunity to see his greatness from close quarters. Here I present from our archives a personal tribute that I had paid to the Swamiji just after he had turned 80:

The canon of objectivity demands that journalism should not succumb to reverence. Of course, in practice this objectivity is either an alibi for an ivory-tower snootiness or is, well, highly subjective, for every scribe has his pet ideas and 'isms' and not only sees the world through those prisms but also paints his verbal pictures with those brushes. But still habits linger and you are reined-in by this in-built mechanism against praise. Also, with so much of it in full public flow, directed often at unworthy individuals, you don't feel like being part of the crowd or getting dissolved in the din. It is therefore, for me, a giant leap of faith to be breaking the barrier of cynicism, cross the threshold of professional inhibition, walk way beyond the prescribed 'safe-distance' and pay respects to a personality non-pareil. And in doing that, I have no doubts in my mind, I am the one who stands elevated.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is a rare phenomenon. A Sanyasi

by a combination of fate and freewill, his sweep goes beyond the familiar practices and paraphernalia that one associates with an ascetic. A Guru by all means, he however is not a mutt head nor does he belong to any Order. He can best be described as a Teacher of Vedanta, a humble nomenclature he prefers but which does not fully reveal or reflect his awesome achievements beyond that field. Still, he is a sterling torchbearer of Bharatavarsha's millennias-old teaching tradition and his daily classes, explaining and expounding the oldest scriptures of mankind, the Vedas & the Bhagavad Gita, are a big draw. A master communicator and a multi-linguist, he can combine wit and wisdom with ease and make the listener comprehend the profound in his own pace and path: An enlightened guiding light that can at once dispel the darkness of ignorance and fear and fill you instead with knowledge and cheer. With Swamiji in the driver's seat, your spiritual sojourn is a happy and rewarding outing.

But to be honest, in all my association with Swamiji, Vedanta was the least that I imbibed. Such lofty matters require a trusting, serene mindset, a faculty that my profession precludes me from possessing. But if his spiritual teachings have barely scratched my thick skull, let alone sinking in, I have found perfect sync with his polemics on some practical issues of common concern. It was 1998 and the Pope was in India, spreading the word around for a huge 'harvest of faith'. His speech agitated me personally and also raised my professional hackles: After all, freedom of religion also means freedom to practice one's own religion without interference but here was a rank foreigner with no locus standi, brazenly intruding on that right and openly asking everyone to defect. I promptly put out a protest in my columns and prayed for a 'crop failure'. But the hurt remained and questions loomed:

Should a liberal person, a journo at that, oppose conversions? Does religious freedom include right to convert others? This and many more. To me, the truth was obvious, as revealed by my spontaneous aversion to the Pope's call, but it defied articulation and worse, acceptance, at least in the mainstream. This was when the Swamiji came out with stunning arguments against religious conversions. His declaration that conversion 'tantamounted to violence', at one stroke, dismissed all self-doubt and actually emboldened me to make it a matter of conviction, personal, professional and patriotic. And I was just one in a crowd of many who were wallowing in the same self-defeating muck of foolish tolerance of the intolerant and coy acquiescence to their mischiefs.

And the impact was not confined to individuals like me but created world-wide ripples. For the first time, Om challenged Rome in the language it understood and the message has truly gone home. Shorn of the semantic sophistry and the secular smokescreen, conversions were shown up for what they are: cheap marketing tricks to enlarge the flock and through that, enhance political control. While it is puerile to believe that the attempts to convert, which is deemed a religious calling by expansionist, exclusivist faiths and their followers, will abate, Swamiji has certainly legitimised the opposition to it, lent the issue voice and vocabulary, reversed the debate and brought it to the global intellectual table. His formulation that conversion is an assault on human rights is a master-stroke that gives a perspective in the modern idiom and no surprise therefore that even the UN has taken note of it. But better still, several 'pagan' faiths world over which were wiped out by the onslaught of evangelising, aggressive religions, are now trying to stage a comeback and reclaim their lost, rightful place, in history and geography too. In that, Swamiji's campaign can be compared to Swami Vivekananda's US Parliament of Religions coup last century.!

But to dub Swamiji as a mere agitationist against conversions is to trivialise his real worth. His opposition flowed from a larger dharmic worldview that Eashwara can be attained by many ways by any seeker and He

has no 'particular address nor any sole franchisee'. Swamiji's mantra: 'There is not one god; there is only God!' It is with this unassailable wisdom that he unapologetically convinced an influential Jewish forum in Israel recently that 'Hindus were not idolators but saw, and therefore, worshipped divinity in all forms'. To the familiar question on everyone's lips 'Should I believe in God', Swamiji's nonchalant reply always is 'Not unless you want to lend him five hundred rupees'! For Swamiji, the almighty is not a matter of belief, but understanding. Reason why he teaches and others listen!

While Swamiji is at the vanguard in protecting and promoting Sanatana Dharma, his concern for the 'dharmi' too is abiding. This spiritual master is a man 'for' the world too: For him, service to society also is Eashwara and the organisations he has spawned, like Aim for Seva, render stupendous services in the fields of education, healthcare, vocational training, women's emancipation, tribal welfare etc. The Acharya Sabha that he launched a few years back seeks to bring various sampradayas on a single platform on issues concerning the Hindu society and faith. This sabha, for instance, is in the forefront of a movement to extricate temples from the grip of a 'secular' State. He is the moving spirit behind many such auspicious ventures and physically moves around a lot too. He is a ceaseless globe-trotter and has ashrams and audiences in Bharath and beyond. But he relishes Rishikesh on the banks of the Ganga the most.

Swamiji recently turned 80 and was feted. For a spiritualist on an eternal quest, Age 80 is a minor mortal milestone. But for the legions of his admirers and disciples it was an occasion for rendering gurudakshina, not of material things, but as an emotional acknowledgement of a man whose message lent meaning to their lives. Sages like him have always sustained and enriched this ancient land. They carry in their soul the undying torch of truth and the undrying spring of compassion. Blessed are those, 'objective' journos included, who come into their orbit!

*Shri Gurubhyo Namaha!*

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4. **Due to large number of applications we can entertain online applications only.  
However, we can assist you with your enquiries at  
[dayanandacamps2014@gmail.com](mailto:dayanandacamps2014@gmail.com)  
or at +91-135-2430769/2431769  
between 08:00 to 12:00 & 15:00 -19:00 Hrs only.**
5. **All applicants will be given equal opportunity. With your username and password you can check the status of your application online. The status of successful applicants will be displayed as "CONFIRMED".**
6. **An online taxi reservation facility is also available.**

**Acharya**

## Pearls of Wisdom



*It is often said that seeing is believing.  
But this is not always true, like seeing  
the raising sun, seeing the blue sky,  
seeing the mirage water etc.*

*There is no good or bad person.  
There is only right or wrong  
action.*



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I am with you all, for ever !