



SPEECH

His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,

President of the Republic of Mauritius

**EVENT: Opening Ceremony of the International Arya
Conference and 150th Anniversary of the Arya Samaj**

**VENUE: Arya Bhawan,
Port Louis**

TIME: 09 30 Hours

Dr the Honourable Arvin Boolell, Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

His Holiness Swami Pranavananda ji Maharaj

Swami Ashutosh ji

Swami Aryavesh ji Maharaj

Eminent Mauritian and International scholars

Sri Rajendraprasad Ramjee, OSK, Arya Ratna, President of the Arya Sabha Mauritius

Esteemed Arya Samajis

Distinguished guests,

Participants,

Members of the media,

All protocol Observed

Sabhee protokol ka paalan kartey huey

Mera app sabhi ko namaskaar, hardik dhanayavad, aur Mauritius Arya Sabha dvaara Arya Samaaj Aandolan kee 150veen (ek sau pachaas veen) varshagaanth kee subhkamnayein

Is shubh avasar par main bahoot khush aur sammaanit mahasoos kar raha hoon.

Mausam ke kaaran is kaaryakram ko punar-nirdhaarit kiya gaya hai.

This program has been rescheduled due to the weather conditions

I feel deeply honored to be associated with the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Arya Samaj movement by Mauritius Arya Sabha and be in your presence today.

I am given to understand that the celebrations of this landmark event extends from Sunday 23 February to Monday 3 March, with activities being conducted across the island, notably this International Arya Conference from today to tomorrow being the key event and involving the participation of eminent resource persons from Mauritius and India.

On this auspicious occasion, the Mauritius Arya Sabha is also launching a commemorative magazine.

You must have made tremendous efforts and mobilized considerable resources in organizing such an important event.

I congratulate you all for this laudable and commendable initiative. I also congratulate all the resource persons for their valuable contributions.

Iss antararaashtreey sammelan ka aayojan karne ke lie aur ek smaarak patrika prakaashit karne ke lie aap sabhee log dhaayavaad ke bhaag hain.

Main hamaare antarraashtreey atithiyon ka vishesh svaagat karta hu.

A special welcome to the Guests of Honour and our Special Guests from India. I do hope that apart from sharing your precious thoughts on the Arya Samaj movement, you will find some time from your busy schedule

to enjoy the multicultural hospitality of our people and the beautiful sceneries of our paradise island.

International Conference

This international conference is fitting tribute to a visionary leader, who dedicated his entire life to the revival of Vedic philosophy and thoughts, eradication of social evils and clarification of our duties as human beings.

The overall aim of the Arya Samaj movement has been “to make the world noble by promoting social, spiritual and physical well-being.”

On this auspicious occasion, I would also like to pay tribute to Arya Sabha Mauritius, which needs to be commended not only for its active propagation of Vedas, but also for its commitment and devotion to social service and educational engagement since its establishment in 1903.

- With 400 branches and 247 centres across the island
- Residential homes that look after the elderly, orphans, the physically challenged, those abandoned by relatives, and survivors of domestic violence;
- A Day-Care de-addiction centre that offers treatment and counselling services for those indulging in substance abuse, sensitization campaigns on health issues, promoting Arts and culture through various activities
- Educational establishments providing **holistic education to children, adolescents and young adults**

You continue to serve our nation irrespective of colour, creed or religion.

The Conference

I do not propose to deliver a long discourse on the life, contributions, legacy and influence of the founder of the Arya Samaaj Movement. There is an exhaustive literature on Arya Samaj on the internet and through your regular activities, you continue to spread the message of Swami Dayanand, the Arya Samaaj and the Vedas.

The themes of this conference dwell on a wide range of issues ,ranging from education, science and medicine, religion, culture, language and conversion, family children and gender, law, economics, politics and governance.

A very comprehensive and ambitious agenda. The presentations, deliberations and recommendations promise to be very enriching.

I wish our learned guests, resource persons and participants a very successful conference.

Mujhe aasha hai ke iss antarraashtreey sammelan ke dauraan aap Arya Samaaj Aandolan, iske mahatva aur yogdaan ke baare mein aur adhik jaanenge.

My Reflections

I now come to a few reflections which I want to share with you.

Swami Dayanand created the Arya Samaj movement in the late 19th century to counter the influence of western colonialism and the degradation of Indian societal values. Swamiji's mission was religious reform, social and cultural regeneration, and political emancipation.

Swami ji did not create a new religion, but rather **a movement (ek andolan)** that was started to respond to the evils of Hindu society.

150 years have gone by since Swami Dayanand started the Arya Samaj movement. We are now in a completely complex, new world, having its own challenges:

- An aging population with a declining birth rate, and the gradual replacement of the extended family system by nuclear families where children **no longer benefit from inter-generational mentoring** that help to shape the character and personality of the younger generation, prevent delinquent behaviors or poor academic performance.
- A growing number of double-income families, single mothers, rising divorce rates, increased incidence of child abuse or child neglect, resulting in all kinds of social misdemeanors among children and the youth.
- We also have an education system today in the world where the acquisition of certificate, diploma and a degree is more important than civic and spiritual and moral values, reinforcing materialism at the expense of spiritualism, undermining solidarity and promoting individualism.
- An institutional crisis where organizations- economic, social, religious, cultural and political- are plagued by the prevalence of

corruption, nepotism, favouritism, discrimination, and poor governance.

- The proliferation of drugs and violence of all kinds.
- The influence of advancing technologies on our lives and living.
- Climate emergency with increasing GHG emissions threatening the very existence of our planet.
- A crisis of leadership.

This is not an exhaustive list of new challenges, many of which did not exist when the Arya Samaj movement was founded.

Yadi ham ateet mein jaen, 1875 (athaaraa sau pachaatar) mein jab Swami Dayaanand Saraswati ji ne aandolan ki sthaapna kee thee, to ham uss bhaaratia samaaj ko dekhte hain jo angrezi aupniveshik shaasan aur pashchimee saanskrtik aur saamaajik prathaaon ke prabhaav mein tha, jo bhaaratia samaaj ki buniyaad aur taane-baane ko kamzor kar raha tha.

If we go back to the past, in 1875, when Swami Dayanand Saraswati ji founded the movement, we find that Indian society was under the influence of British colonial rule and Western cultural and social

practices, which were undermining the very foundation and fabric of Indian society.

On the other hand, there were a number of Indian social, religious and cultural practices like the immolation of widows, child marriage, gender inequality, exclusion of girls, caste-based discrimination, Sati Pratha (Widow Burning), Idol Worship and Superstitions, exploitation by priests, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Social and Religious Conversion, which were detrimental to the progress of the Hindu society.

The Arya Samaaj movement was a response to all these economic and socio-religious and political challenges of that time.

Does the Arya Samaaj movement of 2025 and beyond. have the competencies, resources, vision and leadership to address the modern-day challenges?

What can and should be done so that the movement of Swami Dayanand does not lose its influence and relevance?

Kya 2025 (do hazaar pachees) aur uss se aage ke Arya Samaaj Aandolan mein aadhunik chunautiyon ka samaadhaan karne kee kshamta, sansaadhan, drshti aur netrtya hai?

Swami Dayaanand ka aandolan apna prabhaav aur praasangikta na khoye, iske lie kya kiya ja sakata hai aur kya kiya jaana chaahie?

Can we go on offering prayers and chanting mantras with which our children and youth do not connect? What innovative ways should we

adopt to get our children and youth engaged with Swami Dayanand's teachings and preachings?

Albert Einstein had stated:

We cannot solve today's problems with the same thinking we used to solve past problems.

Ham aaj ki samasyaaon ko usee soch ke saath hal nahin kar sakte, jiss soch ke saath ham pichhlee samasyaaon ko hal karte the.

Another reflection I want to share is about the Swami Dayanand's approach to politics.

Main ek aur soch ko saajha karna chaahta hoon, jo raajneeti ke prati Swami Dayanand ji ke drishtikon ke baare mein hai.

Swamiji was engaged in politics because he wanted India to be free. He was an idealist in politics. Politics means service to the nation, to the people, and is a noble activity.

Swamiji's politics was based on age-long tradition that the Vedas contain truths which are universal.

Swamiji raajaneeti mein vyast they.

But he neither joined a political party nor did he create a political party. Political parties subscribe to competing ideologies which can be a source of controversies and divisions. Arya Samajis can have their political preferences; there is no prohibition or restrictions, but those who hold

leadership positions in Arya Samaj organizations should refrain from indulging in active partisan politics, which can be detrimental to the ideals of Arya Samaj, which preaches unity among its members.

Swami Dayanand ji na to kisee raajneetik dal mein shaamil hue aur na hee unhonne koyee raajneetik dal banaaya.

Raajneetik dal pratis-pardhee vichaar-dhaaraaon ka samarthan kartey hain, jo vivaadon aur vibhaajan ka srot ho sakte hain.

Arya samaajiyon kee apnee raajneetik parth-miktaayen ho saktee hain; iss par koe nishedh ya pratibandh nahin hai,

Lekin jo log Arya Samaj ke sansthaaon mein netritva ke padon par hain, unhein sakriy paksha-paatpoorn raajneeti mein shaamil hone se bachna chaahie, jo Arya Samaaj ke aadarshon ke lie haanikaarak ho sakta hai.

Arya Samaaj apney anuyaaiyon (followers) ke beech ekta ka upadesh deta hai; ussey is maarg-darshak siddhaant ka paalan karna chaahiye.

I am your guest.

You have honoured me and you have given me the opportunity for an address.

I have spoken my mind.

My intention is not hurt anyone or to ask you to agree to all that I have said. It is an invitation for reflection, in the spirit of the International conference that you have organized.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you all a very successful conference on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Arya Samaaj Movement