

Culture VI Class Summary Nov 1, 2009

Subsets of Hinduism

Arya Samaj

- Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand in 1875 based on the teachings of the Vedas
- Arya means noble and samaj means society- Society of Nobles
- He wanted to open the study of Sanskrit to non-brahmins
- Eventually, he started teaching in Hindi so as to make it more accessible to common people

Principles of Arya Samaj

- God is the source of strength.
- God is just.
- The Vedas are the scriptures of knowledge. It is the duty of all Aryas to read them, teach them to others.
- One should accept truth and seek knowledge.
- All acts should be performed in accordance with Dharma, after deliberating what is right and wrong.
- The primary object of Arya Samaj is to do good to the world, by promoting physical, spiritual and social good of everyone Our conduct towards all should be guided by care, and justice.
- We should dispel ignorance and promote knowledge, and science.
- One should see one's own greatest welfare as residing in the welfare of others.
- One should regard oneself under restriction to follow the rules of society. A disciplined individual is free in a democratic society

Brahmo Samaj

- Brahmo Samaj was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1928
- Brahmo means brahmin and samaj means society- Society of Brahmins
- It is influenced by certain principles of Christianity and Islam

Principles of Brahmo Samaj

- There is only one God
- There is no idol worship
- No sacrifice or offering to God
- There is no salvation and no way to achieve it
- There are no scriptures, prophets or priests to follow or worship

Impact of Brahmo Samaj

- Emancipation of women
- Abolition of dowry and sati
- Proponents of widow re-marriage
- Abolition of caste system
- Reform of educational system
- Spread of knowledge by universal access to information

Arya Samaj v/s Brahmo Samaj

- Arya Samaj propounds the Vedas as "divine authority" and advocates going "Back to the Vedas"
- Brahmo Samaj denies that the Vedas are "divine authority" and advocates going "Forward from the Vedas"

- One Samaj is "backward"/retrograde the other is "forward"/(infinitely) progressive.

ISKCON

- The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) was established in 1966 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Srila Prabhupada).

Purpose of ISKCON

- To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge and to educate all people to achieve real unity and peace in the world.
- To propagate a consciousness of Krishna (God)
- To bring the members of the Society nearer to Krishna, thus developing the idea that each soul is part and parcel of Krishna).
- To teach and encourage the congregational chanting of the holy name of God
- To erect a holy place of dedicated to the personality of Krishna.
- To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler, more natural way of life
- To publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings.
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