

Qus-The message of Arya Samaj was socially radical but its emphasis on the infallibility of Vedas caused alienation among some sections. Comment.

Answer: Dayanand Saraswati was the founder of Arya Samaj. He worked for the socio-religious reforms of Indian society. But, his emphasis on religious revivalism caused suspicion among minorities as well as Dalits.

The 19th-centuryth century socio-religious reforms movement was a reaction to the subjugation of India. Reformers rightly pointed out that Indian society had stagnated and needed regeneration. However, their prescriptions to achieve these goals were different. Dayanand Saraswati prescribed the path of going 'back to the Vedas'.

He was impressed by the western sense of discipline and promoted teaching western education along with traditional knowledge. His set of prescriptions for social reforms was indeed radical and far ahead of their time.

But, he believed that material regeneration would be incomplete without spiritual regeneration. To that end, he advocated a return to the ideal Vedic society. He argued that the Vedas are infallible and the values of Vedic society were fully rational

But, such rhetoric raised alarm bells among many sections of societies. Other religious groups like Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, etc. could not accept Vedas as infallible. Also, for the Dalits, Vedas were the source of institutionalized oppression that they had faced for centuries. Later, the 'Shuddhi Movement' started under the banner of Arya Samaj enhanced mutual distrust.

Thus, the revivalist tendencies of Arya Samaj's brand of socio-religious reforms cause some consternation among minorities and Dalits.