PREFACE

The present work has been undertaken with a two-fold object in view:-

(1) to assist the critical scholar, as well as the layman, in their studies of the Vedas, the earliest books in the library of the world, regarding their theme and the method of interpretation;

and

(2) to furnish them with the technical, historical and other cognate matters, relevant to their critical and comparative study.

Thus the work can be divided into two main parts, viz:-

(1) ........ Introduction,
(2) ........ The translation of the Ṛg Vedādi Bhāṣya Bhūmikā of Dayānanda.

The introductory part embodies information of a general character. It also contains discussions on the problems, which hitherto have remained in some respects untouched and untraced by the scholars. Some of the topics, which involve endless controversies in the modern Vedic scholarship, have also been critically examined; as to show the merits or demerits of Dayānanda's method of the Vedic interpretation. Materials from all possible sources have been utilise I have consulted all available authoritative works. I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to all my predecessors, in
the field of Vedic studies. Thus it would be too bold on my part to claim absolute originality, for this work. "All originality" a critic observes, "is only undetected plagiarism." I do not agree with the critic's remark. Although, it implies that originality, in any form, whatsoever, is impossible. I may, however, claim that the form and the plan are all my own. I have also discussed and examined, every problem in a critical manner and have exercised my own judgement.

I have also added a comprehensive and critical biography of Śvāmī Dayānanda, the greatest reformer of Hindu Society in the modern age. Facts, supported by cognate evidence, have been put forward. Besides other problems of imperative importance e.g. the method of Vedic interpretation etc. a critical survey of the history of the Vedic interpretation has been appended; for which I had to critically examine the whole mass of literature concerning Vedic interpretation, including all original Vedic commentaries, published or unpublished so far and this work contains quotations from all original texts.

The second part is the English translation of the Rg Vedādi Bhāṣya Bhūmikā from the original Sanskrit. The author of this great work is Dayānanda who before writing the commentary on the four Vedas, added an extensive and highly critical Introduction to it, which is now presented in English garb. This work is much more voluminous than Śāyāna's Introduction to the Rg Veda-Bhāṣya. It covers 400, closely printed pages and contains exhaustive discussion on topics which could not be included and imagined by Śāyāna.

Dayānanda's Rg Vedādi Bhāṣya Bhūmikā is a unique work in the field of Vedic scholarship. Almost all Vedic works and other
scriptural and philosophical treatises in Sanskrit have been quoted here. It contains approximately more than one thousand citations from all spheres of the Sanskrit literature, including three hundred verses from the Vedas themselves. It is not an easy job to translate a technical work from the original Sanskrit into English. I am conscious that my translation is only an humble attempt and is open to criticism at many places; but all the same, it is a very sincere effort to clearly convey the idea of the original to the mind of the reader. I have tried my best to give a faithful translation and have added critical and comparative notes to it on the controversial points. Having studied these notes and gone through the quotations any one will be able to correct my mistakes. The auxiliary material is intended to clear and light the way and not to darken it. I have made, in other words, an honest effort to explain things and not "to explain them away."

I may add here that Dayānanda has interpreted many verses and other citations from the Vedic literature in his own way, quite differently from the generally accepted conception and interpretation and has drawn radically different conclusion. I have remained faithful to him and have conveyed to the reader's mind what our author aimed at. The usual interpretation, which is acceptable to other scholars has also been given in the foot-notes with my own independent comments. Hence, no difficulty, of which I was conscious at the time of writing, have I wilfully evaded but squarely faced it and tried to clear it away. At a number of places, I have to consult the various editions and also the MSS in order to ascertain the original reading and to remove the textual mistakes, due to Printer's devil. It entailed hard labour and considerable patience.

A word about the author of the Rg Vedādi-Bhāṣya Bhūmikā
would not be out of place here. Dayānanda's supreme effort of life was to give back to the world, the Vedas - that ancient treasure-house of Divine wisdom. He had taken a long and deep draught at the perennial spring-head which had quenched his thirst and filled his soul with indescribable peace. He had wandered long and far in the gloom, before he received the Light, the light of true and pure Dharma, as revealed in the Vedas. He was a Pari-Vrājaka - a preacher king - and the whole humanity was his congregation. According to him, the Vedas were for the lowliest of the low and for the highest of the high. They were the fountain head from which flowed the nectar of virtue and knowledge in a never drying stream to slake the thirst of all the children - the babes and the grown ups of the Divine Mother. To this source of Peace and Purity he guided the misguided mankind and bade them drink deep at it. It was his mission and for this he lived and died.

But as a translucent stream descending from the white snows, gets mixed in its downward march with muddy streamlets which pollute its waters, so this great river of Divine Truth had become mixed with the streamlet of human error. Dayānanda saw this and saw even more than this. There had arisen commentators and interpreters who had grossly misinterpreted the Veda. It was, therefore, his mission to interpret the Veda in a proper manner.

Vedic scholarship in India, in the true sense of the term, appears to have ceased with the great work of Yāska - the Nirukta -. In fact, among the ancient Vedic commentaries only the Brāhmaṇas and the Nirukta have come down to us. That there were other works is amply proved by the fact that Yāska mentions several of them. The commentaries of Sāyana, Mahīdhara &c, are of a recent age. All of them are much later than Yāska. According to Dayānanda these
commentaries were gross misinterpretations. He based his commentary on the Brāhmaṇas and the Nirukta and rejected all other commentaries. His interpretations are based on the Etymological method mainly.

All this explains the importance of Dayānanda and his great work, the Rg Vedādi Bhāṣya Bhūmikā, which I have presented to the English knowing people in English garb. I am sure, the modern Vedic scholar in India as well as in Europe will greatly be benefitted by this work. Thus this work is a great desideratum.

When I was desired to undertake the present task by my late lamented Guru, Dr. L. Sarup, M.A., D.Phil (Oxon), Principal, University Oriental College, Lahore, I had no idea of the labour involved in it, nor will the general reader have any adequate notion of the time and labour spent in preparing the present volume. To produce a faithfull translation of a work like this, can be appreciated by such persons only as have done some critical work themselves.

But I do not grudge the time and labour and my ample reward will be to know that the present work has made the study of the Vedas easier even to a small extent.

It would be surprising, if the present work, were entirely free of defects. No one is more conscious about it than myself. For this, I crave sympathy and indulgence of the readers.

The writer of these pages, pays his humble homage of reverence, to all the scholars of the past and present age, for their precious and scholarly productions in the domain of Vedic scholarship. I am greatly indebted to them.