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Word 'rashtra' is being used in narrow sense, says Arya Samaj scholar Swami Agnivesh

He said over \$1,700 billion is being spent on armies and ammunition across the world. "If only 10% of this amount is spent on education, poverty and development, all of our problems will vanish," he said.

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Arshdeep Arshi
Hindustan Times, Chandigarh



Arya Samaj scholar and social activist Swami Agnivesh speaking to the media at Press Club in Chandigarh on Friday. (Keshav Singh/HT)

Arya Samaj scholar and social activist Swami Agnivesh, who was at the Chandigarh Press Club on Friday, said, "The word 'Rashtra' is being used in a very narrow and wrong sense. In the Vedas, it does not mean only India but the whole world."

Agnivesh, who termed the entire world as home, had been a former member of legislative assembly of Haryana. He was also instrumental in the formation of Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987.

'Human is the only caste'

"There is no word called Hindu in the Vedas. There is only one caste that is human. The Vedas teach you to be humans," he said.

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India won the toss and elected to bat.

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“Humans have divided the God into Hindu, Muslim and what not. God created man but the man in turn created several Gods and created factions by doing so,” said Agnivesh, who will be holding a three-day Veda convention in New Delhi from December 15.

He said that over \$1,700 billion is being spent on armies and ammunition across the world. “If only 10% of this amount is spent on education, poverty and development, all of our problems will vanish,” he said.

The activist, while discussing the ritualistic nature of religion, said that godmen such as Ram Rahim should be kept in check. He said that the need of the hour was to promote scientific temper so that the youth did not fall into the clutches of ‘ritualistic babas’.

Speaking on the ‘Padmavati’ row, Agnivesh said, “Those who are speaking against the film have not even watched it. If they want to protest, they should create another film or move court.”

“Action should be taken against those who have sought beheading of people,” he added.

‘Forced conversions in name of ghar wapsi should be banned’

Agnivesh also spoke on Kerala conversion case and said that Hadiya should have the freedom to choose her own life. “Anyone who wishes to convert to any other religion should have the right to do so. However, there should be a ban on forced conversions in the name of ghar wapsi,” he said.

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