

worship the celestial gods are the food of such gods," is an allegorical expression, and only means that they are comforts to the celestial gods, as food is to mankind; for he who has no faith in the Supreme Being is rendered subject to these gods. The Ved affirms the same: *vis.*, "He who worships any god excepting the Supreme Being, and thinks that he is distinct and inferior to that god, knows nothing, and is considered as a 'domestic beast of these gods.'" And the Vedant also asserts; *vis.*, "The worship authorized by all the Veds is of one nature, as the direction for the worship of the only Supreme Being is invariably found in every part of the Ved; and the epithets the 'Supreme and the Omnipresent Being,' etc., commonly imply "God alone."\*

The following passages of the Ved affirm that God is the sole object of worship, *vis.*,† "Adore God alone." "Know God alone; give up all other discourse." And the Vedant says, that "It is found in the Veds,‡ 'That none but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, nothing excepting him should be adored by a wise man.'"

Moreover, the Vedant declares that "Byas is of opinion that the adoration of the Supreme Being is required of mankind as well of the celestial gods; because the possibility of self-resignation to God is equally observed in both mankind and the celestial deities."§ The Ved also states,|| that "Of the celestial gods, of the pious Brahmuns, and of men in general, that person who understands and believes the Almighty Being, will be absorbed in him." It is therefore concluded that the celestial gods and mankind have an equal duty in divine worship; and besides it is proved from the following authority of the Ved, that any man who adore the Supreme Being is adored by all the celestial gods, *vis.*, "All the celestial gods worship him who applies his mind to the Supreme Being."¶

\* 1st, 3rd, 3rd.

† Brih'darunnuc.

‡ 67th, 3rd, 3rd.

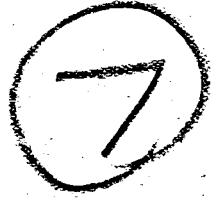
§ 26th, 3rd, 1st.

|| Brih'darunnuc.

¶ Chhandoggu.

TRANSLATION  
OF SEVERAL  
PRINCIPAL BOOKS, PASSAGES, AND TEXTS

OF  
**THE VEDS,**  
AND OF  
SOME CONTROVERSIAL WORKS



ON  
**BRAHMUNICAL THEOLOGY.**

BY  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

*Memorial Edition.*

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## CONTENTS.

	Page
Autobiography of Raja Ram Mohun Roy ... ..	iv
A Sketch of the Raja's Life. By Babu Dina Nath Ganguli ...	xi
Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore's Reminiscences of Ram Mohun Roy ... ..	xxiii
Ram Mohun Roy—as a Jurist and Politician. By Mr. N. N. Ghose, <i>Barrister-at-Law</i> ... ..	xxxvii
Ram Mohun Roy's Place in Literature. By Babu Mohini Mohun Chatterji, M.A., B.L. ... ..	xliii
Ram Mohun Roy—as a Theologian. By Pandit Sitanath Tatwa- bhushan ... ..	xliv
Ram Mohun Roy—as an Educationist. By Babu Manmatha Nath Dutt, M.A., M.R.A.S. ... ..	lix
The Universal and the National in Ram Mohun Roy. By Babu Bipin Chandra Pal ... ..	lxv
Hints on the Study of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. By Babu Brajendra Nath Shil, M.A. ... ..	lxxi
Translation of an Abridgment of the Védánt, or Resolution of all the Veds; the most celebrated and revered Work of Brahminical Theology; establishing the Unity of the Supreme Being, and that He alone is the object of Propitiation and Worship ... ..	1
Translation of the Moonduk-Oopunishud of the Uthurvu-Véd ...	23
Translation of the Céna Upanishad, one of the Chapters of the Sáma Véda ... ..	43
Translation of Kut'h-Oopunishud of the Ujoor Véd ... ..	53
Translation of the Ishopunishud, one of the Chapter of the Yajur Véda ... ..	91
A Translation into English of a Sungskrit Tract, inculcating the Divine Worship; esteemed by those who believe in the Revela- tion of the Védés, as most appropriate to the Nature of the Supreme Being ... ..	97
A Defence of Hindoo Theism, in reply to the Attack of an Ad- vocate for Idolatry, at Madras ... ..	109
A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Védés; in reply to an Apology for the present State of Hindoo Worship... ..	139

	Page
An Apology for the Pursuit of Final Beatitude, independently of Brahmunical Observances ... ..	169
Translation of a Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the practice of Burning Widows Alive; from the original Bungla ... ..	177
A Second Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the practice of Burning Widows Alive ... ..	193
Abstract of the Arguments regarding the Burning of Widows, considered as a Religious Rite ... ..	229
Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females, according to the Hindoo Law of Inheritance ... ..	241

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
OF  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY  
WITH  
A PREFACE  
BY  
MISS MARY CARPENTER.

[ *Reprinted from Last Days in England of  
Raja Ram Mohun Roy.* ]

## PREFACE

BY MISS MARY CARPENTER.

---

THE following letter from Ram Mohun Roy himself first appeared in the *Athenæum*, and in the *Literary Gazette*; from one or other of which it was copied into various newspapers. It was written just before he went to France. It was probably designed for some distinguished person who had desired him to give an outline of his history; and he adopted this form for the purpose. The letter may be considered as addressed to his friend Mr. Gordon of Calcutta.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

---

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In conformity with the wish, you have frequently expressed, that I should give you an outline of my life, I have now the pleasure to give you the following very brief sketch.

My ancestors were Brahmins of a high order, and from time immemorial, were devoted to the religious duties of their race, down to my fifth progenitor, who about one hundred and forty years ago, gave up spiritual exercises for worldly pursuits and aggrandisement. His descendants ever since have followed his example, and, according to the usual fate of courtiers, with various success, sometimes rising to honour and sometimes falling; sometimes rich and sometimes poor; sometimes excelling in success, sometimes miserable through disappointment. But my maternal ancestors, being of the sacerdotal order by profession as well as by birth, and of a family than which none holds a higher rank in that profession, have up to the present day uniformly adhered to a life of religious observances and devotion, preferring peace and tranquillity of mind to the excitements of ambition, and all the allurements of worldly grandeur.

In conformity with the usage of my paternal race, and the wish of my father, I studied the Persian and Arabic languages,—these being indispensable to those who attached themselves to the courts of the Mahomedan princes; and agreeably to the usage of my maternal relations, I devoted myself to the study of the Sanskrit and the theological works written in it, which contain the body of Hindu literature, law and religion. When about the age of sixteen, I composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of the

idolatrous system of the Hindoos. This, together with my known sentiments on that subject, having produced a coolness between me and my immediate kindred, I proceeded on my travels, and passed through different countries, chiefly within, but some beyond, the bounds of Hindoostan, with a feeling of great aversion to the establishment of the British Power in India. When I had reached the age of twenty, my father recalled me, and restored me to his favour; after which I first saw and began to associate with Europeans, and soon after made myself tolerably acquainted with their laws and form of Government. Finding them generally more intelligent, more steady and moderate in their conduct, I gave up my prejudice against them, and became inclined in their favour, feeling persuaded that their rule, though a foreign yoke, would lead more speedily and surely to the amelioration of the native inhabitants; and I enjoyed the confidence of several of them even in their public capacity. My continued controversies with the Brahmins on the subject of their idolatry and superstition, and my interference with their custom of burning widows, and other pernicious practices, revived and increased their animosity against me; and through their influence with my family, my father was again obliged to withdraw his countenance openly, though his limited pecuniary support was still continued to me.

After my father's death I opposed the advocates of idolatry with still greater boldness. Availing myself of the art of printing, now established in India, I published various works and pamphlets against their errors, in the native and foreign languages. This raised such a feeling against me, that I was at last deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends, to whom, and the nation to which they belong, I always feel grateful.

The ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that of opposition to *Brahminism*, but to a *perversion* of it; and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmins

was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities which they profess to revere and obey. Notwithstanding the violence of the opposition and resistance to my opinions, several highly respectable persons, both among my own relation and others, began to adopt the same sentiments.

I now felt a strong wish to visit Europe, and obtain, by personal observation, a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion, and political institution. I refrained, however, from carrying this intention into effect until the friends who coincided in my sentiments should be increased in number and strength. My expectations having been at length realised, in November, 1830, I embarked for England, as the discussion of the East India Company's Charter was expected to come on, by which the treatment of the Natives of India, and its future government, would be determined for many years to come, and An Appeal to the King in Council, Against the Abolition of the Practice of Burning Widows, was to be heard before the Privy Council; and his Majesty the Emperor of Delhi had likewise commissioned me to bring before the authorities in England certain encroachments on his rights by the East Indian Company. I accordingly arrived in England in April, 1831.

I hope, you will excuse the brevity of this sketch, as I have no leisure at present to enter into particulars, and

I remain, &c.,

RAMMOHUN ROY.



A S K E T C H  
OF THE LIFE  
OF  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.  
BY  
BABU DINA NATH GANGULI.

[ *A Reprint.* ]

A. SKETCH OF THE LIFE  
OF  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

---

RAM MOHUN ROY was born at Radhanagore in the Hughly District in Bengal in May, 1772. His father's name was Ram Kanta Roy, and the name of his mother was Tarini Devi.

Ram Kanta was at first in the service of the Nawab of Moorshidabad, but the ill-treatment he received from some of the officers of the Nawab's Court forced him to give up his appointment. He then came to Krishnagore, and undertook the management of some estates in that district belonging to the Maharaja of Burdwan. His wife was a lady of good parts, and she helped Ram Kanta in the management of his affairs.

Ram Kanta was a Vaishnava; and both he himself and his wife Tarini Devi were of a religious turn of mind; and their piety exerted not a little influence upon the character of their illustrious son.

When about five years old, Ram Mohun showed his eagerness to obtain a knowledge of things. Noticing this, his eldest brother, Jaga Mohun, undertook to educate him. After some time, Ram Mohun returned to his parents, and his father sent him to a *Pathshala*, where he made some progress in Bengali. But, as the knowledge of Persian was indispensable at that time, Ram Mohun was sent to Patna, where he learnt Persian and Arabic. The education he thus received gave him an insight into the works of Aristotle and Euclid as also of some of the great men of Persia and Arabia. After a couple of years, Ram Kanta sent his son to Benares to study Sanskrit. In a short time, Ram Mohun became

well versed in the literature of his people, notably the *Upanishads*.

Ram Mohun then returned to Radhanagore. The religious education he had received made him an admirer of the ancient religion of the Hindus, but it shook his faith in the popular ceremonialism of his countrymen.

Ram Kanta came to know of it and became displeased with his son. The publication of a book against idolatry, at this time, irritated Ram Kanta so much that he expelled Ram Mohun from his house. Ram Mohun was then in the 16th year of his age. Going on a travel through the country, he visited several places of India and went to Thibet also. During his travels, he learned several dialects and collected information in connection with the religious practices of the people.

The solicitations of his wife induced Ram Kanta to take Ram Mohun back into the family. Ram Mohun renewed his attacks against the religious practices of the time, which roused the ire of Ram Kanta once more, and Ram Mohun was expelled from the family a second time. After the death of Ram Kanta, Tarini Devi, however, brought back Ram Mohun into the family. Ram Kanta left some property one-third of which fell into Ram Mohun's share.

In the year 1800, Ram Mohun took service under Government. His first employment was that of a clerk in the Rungpore Collectorate. He was afterwards promoted to the rank of Sheristadar. In the 22nd year of his age, Ram Mohun commenced to study English, and when 28 years old, he used to speak English tolerably well, but could not write in it. John Digby, the Collector, was a lover of literature, and coming to know of the studious habits of Ram Mohun, he helped him in his studies of the English language. During his stay at Rungpore, Ram Mohun carried on religious controversies with the Pandits, wrote some tracts in the Persian language, and translated portions of the Védánta. In addi-

tion to these, he used to hold religious conferences every evening at his residence. Some of the residents of the place used to attend these conferences, though most of them were ranged against him. Ram Mohun served Government for about 14 years. In the year 1813, he retired from the service with a view to find more time than what he could have at his disposal as a servant of the Government, for his religious work.

Leaving Government service, Ram Mohun came to pay his respects to his mother. On arrival, Ram Mohun was pained to hear of the death of his two brothers. He remained at home for some time. But his attacks against the popular religion of his countrymen by means of pamphlets and controversies with the Pandits, roused the ire of the Hindus, and they began to persecute him. He bore this with patience, and continued to do good to those who treated him as their enemy. The doings of Ram Mohun displeased Tarini Devi very much, and moreover, her neighbours spoke to her disparagingly of her son's doings. She was therefore obliged to request Ram Mohun to quit her house.

Ram Mohun went to Rughoonathpore with his family. He built a house there, and lived in it. But, soon after, it became apparent to him that the mission of his life could not be carried out from an obscure village. He therefore removed to Calcutta. Ram Mohun was then in the fortieth year of his age. Here his two sons and a relation of his lived with him. It may be mentioned here that, after giving up his service, Ram Mohun lived at Moorshidabad for a short time. Here he wrote a pamphlet against idolatry, in the Persian language named *Tuhfatoon Mowahhiddin*.

Ram Mohun now commenced his work in a systematic manner. He carried on debates with the Hindu Pandits and the Christian Missionaries, and published several pamphlets advocating the cause of monotheism. Among his earliest works were a translation of the *Vedanta Sutras* and the



*Vedanta Sara* by which he made his mark as a Sanskrit Scholar and dialectician. It was his object to show the hollowness of the system of worship prevalent at the time, and to lead his erring countrymen to the sublime religion of the ancient sages of India.

Some of the eminent men of Calcutta acknowledged the abilities of Ram Mohun, and appreciated his work; but most of his countrymen were against him. The Brahmins of the day considered themselves to be the gods of the people, and they kept out of their sight the sacred books of the Hindus. Ram Mohun published them with translations, one after another, and he pointed out to his countrymen the truth of the monotheistic teachings of their scriptures. But they could not appreciate his work or grasp his ideals, and so became inimical to him. The Pandits of the day published pamphlets with the object of refuting the arguments adduced by Ram Mohun. These pamphlets were replete with revilings and vituperations. Ram Mohun bore them with patience. His replies were uniformly courteous.

Catholicity marked Ram Mohun's career. His researches were not confined to the Hindu Shastras alone. He studied Koran in Arabic, the old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. The precepts of Jesus pleased him so much that he published them in the year 1820 in the form of a book named, *The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*. Our countrymen might infer from this that Ram Mohun valued these precepts more than those contained in the Hindu Shastras. But such was not the case. When asked by a friend, Ram Mohun said, that the Védás contained the same lessons of morality, but in a scattered form.

The book referred to, described Jesus as a religious teacher, but not as a Divine Being. This irritated the Christian missionaries of Bengal, especially Dr. Marshman, who was then the editor of the *Friend of India*. He wrote

an article in support of the divinity of Jesus. Ram Mohun defended his position in his *Appeals to the Christian Public*, which appeared in pamphlet forms.

After this, several controversies took place between Ram Mohun and the Christian preachers of Serampore and Calcutta. Ram Mohun started a diglot periodical, in English and Bengali, called the *Brahmunical Magazine* to defend the religious books of the Hindus. In a separate pamphlet, he showed the futility of the Christian doctrine of Trinity; and in the controversy he carried on with Dr. Tytler, he proved that there was no difference between the idolatry of the Trinitarians and that of the Hindus. In connection with these controversies, it is worthy of note that the Rev. W. Adam, a Trinitarian Christian Missionary, who had come to India to propagate evangelical Christianity, endeavoured to bring to Ram Mohun over to his religion; but the arguments of Ram Mohun convinced him that the doctrines of Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, and Atonement by the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus, were against the teachings of the Bible; and the Missionary renounced Trinitarianism and became a Unitarian Christian.

In the second year of his residence in Calcutta, Ram Mohun formed a Religious Association at his house, called the Atmya Sabha. At this Association, the Védás used to be recited and Hymns sung. This Association developed into the Brahmo Somaj in the month of August of the year 1828. The Meetings of the Somaj used to be held at a house hired for the purpose. Many of the Hindus of Calcutta attended them. In a short time, funds were collected, and a building was erected to which the Somaj was removed on the 11th day of *Magh* (January) of the year 1830.

At this time, Ram Mohun met with some domestic calamities. His mother breathed her last. Soon after, his second wife departed from this life, and this was followed by the death of one of his grandsons.

After placing the Brahma Samaj on a firm footing, Ram Mohun turned his attention to the cause of social reform. The prevailing practice of *Sutti* was the first work he took in hand. He wrote several papers on the subject. The writings of Ram Mohun attracted the attention of Lord W. Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India, who sent for Ram Mohun and had frequent conference with him on the subject. The Government became convinced of the desirability of putting a stop to the cruel practice; and at last, on the 4th of December, 1829 A. D., an enactment was passed abolishing the rite. This caused a great commotion among the Hindus. An association called the Dharma Sabha was established by the prominent Hindus of Calcutta, who made an Appeal to the Throne against the Sutti Act.

At this time, Ram Mohun started a weekly periodical in Bengali, named *Sambada Kaumadi*. Its objects were to inculcate the principles of higher Hinduism, and to advocate the cause of the general welfare of India. The Dharma Sabha published a counter periodical, named *Chandrika*; and a hot discussion was carried on, through the medium of these two periodicals, between Ram Mohun and the members of the Dharma Sabha. Failing to overcome Ram Mohun by arguments, the latter took sinister steps to thwart the objects of the Brahma Samaj. The Secretary of the Sabha went from house to house to lay malicious charges against Ram Mohun and his followers, and the Sabha threatened those who attended the Samaj with excommunication from Hindu Society. At last, matters came to such a pass that some plans were discovered even against the life of Ram Mohun.

Nothing daunted, Ram Mohun continued to work for the good of his country with unabated zeal. He wrote papers against polygamy, kulinism and the restriction of widow-marriage, always basing his case on the authority of the Shastras. In addition to religious and social reformation, Ram Mohun did much towards the diffusion of English

knowledge and the improvement of vernacular literature. He encouraged female education also. Politics also occupied the attention of Ram Mohun. He started a periodical in the Persian language in which he published articles on politics for the perusal of both his Hindu and Mahomedan countrymen. In fact, Ram Mohun did everything in his power for the welfare of his country.

It now became necessary for Ram Mohun to pay a visit to England. A discussion was to take place in England about the New Charter of the East India Company, and the Appeal from the Dharma Sabha against the Sutti Act was to be heard. A favourable opportunity also presented itself. The Ex-Emperor of Delhi had a complaint to lay before the Throne of England, and he offered to send Ram Mohun as his Envoy to the British Court. He placed funds in his hands and honoured him with the title of Raja.

Ram Mohun started for England on the 15th of November, 1830, accompanied by Raja Ram, an orphan, Ramruttun Mookerji and Ram Hurry Dass. The vessel landed at its destination on the 8th of April, 1831. Ram Mohun went to Liverpool the same day. The fame of Ram Mohun had preceded him to England and all the eminent men of the place came seeking the acquaintance of the great Brahmin reformer.

The Raja was presented to his Majesty William the fourth by Sir J. C. Hobhouse, the then President of the Board of Control, and the British Public did him great honor during his stay in England. On the occasion of the King's Coronation, a place was given him among the Ambassadors of the different European Nations. When a grand dinner was given to the public on the occasion of the opening of the London Bridge, Ram Mohun was invited to it, and on the 6th of July, a dinner was given in his honor at the London Tavern.

All classes of the people of England honoured Ram

Mohun. The Unitarian Association welcomed him and he attended several meetings of that body of Christians.

During his stay in England, Ram Mohun did much for the good of his countrymen. He placed before the Committee of the House of Commons, which sat in the years 1831 and 1832 to deal with Questions relating to India, interesting papers on the subjects discussed and gave his evidence before it.

When the Appeal against the Sutti Act was heard in Parliament, Ram Mohun presented in person the Petitions in support of the Act, he had brought with him ; and he had the satisfaction of seeing the rejection of the Appeal on the 11th of July, 1832.

Towards the end of 1831, Ram Mohun went to France. Here he studied the French language. During his stay in that country, he was introduced to the French King, Louis Phillippe, and had the honour of dining with him twice. The eminent men of France also honoured him. The Society Asiatique elected him as an honorary member.

Ram Mohun wished to be present in London at the time of the discussion of some important questions in Parliament, and he repaired thither in February, 1833. On his arrival, he was invited by Dr. Carpenter and other friends to visit Bristol ; but the important work he had to do detained him in London for some months longer. He remained there till the passing of the Indian Bill.

It may be mentioned here that, during his stay in London, Ram Mohun published translations of several religious works of the Hindus, and carried on religious discussions with several eminent men. He published also several papers relating to Indian administration. He wrote also particulars of his voyage and travels : but there is nothing to show what became of them.

Ram Mohun repaired to Bristol in September, 1833. He

was accommodated in a house at Stapleton Grove, a village near Bristol with Mr. John Hare and Miss Hare.

On the 19th of September, Ram Mohun had an attack of fever. Miss Hare attended him. The disease took a serious turn. Every care was taken of him, and the best doctors of the place attended him. But their efforts proved abortive. The Raja expired on the 27th of September, 1833. His body was interred on the 18th of October, 1833, at a spot in a shrubbery, near the lawn under some elms.

The news of this sad event spread throughout Europe and America and the eminent persons of these Continents mourned the loss which the world in general, and India in particular, sustained. England felt the loss greatly; several Churches held Special Services in commemoration of the great man, and Hymns, invoking blessings on the spirit of the departed, were sung at the close of Sermons. Some ladies composed Poems as Tributes to his Memory.

We conclude this Sketch with the following lines taken from a life of the Raja :—

“ But whilst all this was passing in the West, India knew not what had befallen her. Just like girls, who feel a great pleasure in the marriage of a male with a female one, not knowing what real marriage is, the enjoyments of the sons of India were centred in the decoration and worship of idols, not comprehending the Great Being these symbols were intended to typify, and it is no wonder that they should fail to appreciate the worth of the great man who tried to take away the veil of ignorance that had enveloped the light of truth.”

MAHARSHI DEVEDNRA NATH TAGORE'S  
REMINISCENCES  
OF  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

[ *A REPRINT.* ]

---

CALCUTTA:

1896.

## MAHARSHI DEVENDRA NATH TAGORE'S REMINISCENCES.

---

THIS venerable old man, the honored leader and hoary-headed patriarch of the Brahma Samaj, has just passed his eightieth year. But the enormous strain that the work of the Brahma Samaj had put upon him in his earlier days, the incessant anxiety for its life and development that he felt during one of the most critical periods of the history of this great movement, when the seed that had been sown by Raja Ram Mohun Roy showed lamentable signs of decay and death, has left its deep mark upon the constitution of Devendra Nath Tagore, who looks, therefore, immensely older and more infirm than even a Bengali octogenarian. He can hardly use his eyes or ears; and has to be talked to in the highest pitch of one's voice, and even then he understands the meaning of the speaker more by the power of his keen intelligence than that of his ear.

It was a very fine morning, such as mornings usually are in Bengal, in September and October, when we went to see the Grand Old Man of the Brahma Samaj. He lives in a two-storied house situate in one of the neatest and quietest part of Calcutta. His old family-dwelling house is located about the most densely-populated portion of Calcutta. But the Maharshi does not live there. He has been living away from his large family since many years now. His eldest son, a widower,—one of the few original thinkers that Bengal has produced in this century, lives with him, and a grandson also lives here with his family, to generally look after the Grand Old Man. When we called, Maharshi Devendra Nath had not as yet come out of his bed-room. Generally he gets up very early, between three and four o' clock in the morning,



and having performed his ablutions and morning devotions, he goes out for a drive at about half past seven and returns at eight, after which visitors are received. A slight attack of rheumatism, however, does not allow him now to go out for the morning drive. But as his limbs have to be fomented every morning, he cannot get out of bed before 7-30 or 8. This morning, some ladies belonging to the orthodox section of the community had called. Devendra Nath is regarded by most people as a saint and seer, and even many orthodox people of both sexes go to pay their respects to and receive the blessings of this Grand Old Saint of the Brahma Samaj. The ladies, of course, had precedence of us; and it was therefore nearly half past eight o'clock when we were ushered into his presence. He was seated on a chair, in the southern veranda, on the second storey. A small marble tray stood on his right, and a few chairs lay arranged in two parallel rows to his right and left. On the tray there were a beautiful camellia, just unfolding its virgin sweetness, and the Maharshi's white handkerchief.

As we went up to him and made our obeisance to him, in the reverential method of our people, by touching his feet, our name was called out by a friend, Pandit Priya Nath Shastri, one of the Ministers of the Adi-Brahma Samaj, and a most beloved disciple of the Maharshi. The venerable old man stretched out his hand, and, as it would appear to one not acquainted fully with the ways and ideas of the Maharshi, shook hands with us. But he did not really shake hands with us. He does not like Western manners and European ideas in these matters. What he did was simply to feel our hands, as he himself presently explained to us. Asking us to sit by him, he said :—

“I am, you see, like a caged bird eager to fly away to its native sky. This is not my country, I belong to that grander and purer region, and am eagerly waiting to go there. I do not see you with my eyes, but I can understand and know

you by my inner light. I therefore seek your touch. I can know you from your touch. But I have not lost anything through loss of sight or hearing. For I find that in proportion as these external organs of knowledge grow weak, the power of spiritual perception grows strong. But still I have to devote a great deal of time to nursing my body. I am just now undergoing some electric treatment. I got up before 4 o'clock, and had to spend a good deal of time in putting this disordered frame to proper order. I must do these things. It is His order. I can't take my usual airing now, except His air."

The Maharshi talks like a child,—talks on continually in his own strain, without waiting to be asked any questions; and one must use some tact in drawing him out on any particular topic. So, as soon as he finished the last sentence, we cried out to the topmost pitch of our voice that the Anniversary of the Death of Raja Ram Mohun Roy was close upon us, and that we were making the needful arrangements for the purpose. The conversation immediately turned on Raja Ram Mohun Roy. The Maharshi said:—

"I used to go very frequently to Raja Ram Mohun Roy's garden-house. It was in Maniktola. I was a student in Ram Mohun Roy's School at *Hedua* (Cornwallis Square). His son Rama Prasad was a class-mate of mine, and I used to go to see him with Rama Prasad, almost every Saturday, after school hours. The Raja had a swinging cot hanging from one of the trees in his garden—Rama Prasad and I would swing there. Sometimes the Raja would come and join us, and having helped me to swing for some time, he would himself get on the cot, and ask me to help him, saying.—"Brother, push me now."

On our enquiring after the *Maharshi's* age then, he said:—

"I can't exactly say how old I was then, I was a mere school boy—and you can guess my age. I must have been.

about 8 or 9 years." Continuing to relate his recollections of the Raja, the *Maharshi* said :—

"The Raja liked me, and I had free access to him at all hours. Sometimes I would peep in during his breakfast. It usually consisted of bread and honey, and I remember him telling me one day, as I went in during his breakfast, 'Brother, here I am eating pure bread and honey, but people say I eat beef.'"

"Sometimes I would go in as the Raja came out for his bath. He was a curious bather. Before bath he would literally get himself steeped in mustard oil, which would run dripping from all his bare limbs. He was a stout man, broad-chested, and muscular, and the sight of his bare body dipped in oil, with one small piece of cloth tied round the waist, struck awe into my boyish heart. He would, in this dress, come down with heavy steps, uttering Sanskrit, Persian, or Arabic verses and jump into a huge tub of water. He would remain in this tub for more than an hour, all the while muttering his favourite verses, and evidently absorbed in them. I could not understand anything of what he muttered so devoutly, but it appears to me now that that was the Raja's *Upashana* or Prayers.

"Raja Ram, the Raja's adopted son, was very naughty; and he used to play all sorts of tricks on the Raja, but all this could never disturb the equanimity of the Raja's temper. In fact, Ram Mohun Roy had the sweetest temper that I have ever seen in any man. One day I went in when the Raja was taking his midday nap. He was lying on a cot, on his back, in deep slumber. Raja Ram called me, saying, "Will you see a fun? Then come." I went to him, and he quietly walked up to the Raja's bed, and all on a sudden pounced upon him, falling flat on his breast. Nothing disturbed, the Raja awoke, saying,—'Raja Ram, Raja Ram,' and locked him in his embrace.

"One day Rama Prasad and I went up to the Raja. He

was in his sitting room. There was a cot in this room. As soon as we went near him, he asked Rāma Prasad to sing one of his favourite Sanskrit Hymns :—

अजरमशोकं

जगदालोकं ।

“Ajaramas'okam

“Jagadalokam.”

Rama Prasad got exceedingly nervous. He could neither sing properly nor from fear of his father refuse to obey him. So he quietly stepped underneath the cot and from there began to repeat in a most plaintive tone :—

अजरमशोकं

जगदालोकं ।

“The Raja used now and again to come to our house. My father was a great admirer of the Raja. He was in his early days a staunch believer in the popular religion of the country, but contact with the Raja gradually landed him into a general want of faith in these practices, though he never became thoroughly posted in the truths of theism as preached by Raja Ram Mohun Roy. In the early days of his friendship with the Raja, my father was in the habit of performing his *puja* or worship, with flower and other materials, every morning ; and he used to do all these things with really devout feelings. But his regard for the Raja was even greater than his devotion to these pious offices ; and it oftentimes happened that while he was engaged in these devotions, the Raja would come to see him. As soon as the Raja would enter our lane, information would be sent to my father, who would immediately get up from his *puja* and come out to receive the Raja. Such was the influence that the Raja exercised over his friends.

“You see, I cannot talk of the Raja without talking of my father. So far as I was concerned, my recollections of

the Raja are intimately bound up with those of my father. I hope you don't mind it.

"Once I went to invite the Raja to the festivities of the *Durga Puja* at our place. I went as the representative of my grandfather, and in the usual way, I said:—'Ram Moni Thakur begs to invite you to his house, to take part in the festivities of the Puja.' 'The Raja cried out with his usual earnestness—'Ask *me* to the Puja?' That voice is still ringing in my ears. He was not offended with me—by no means. To me he was as sweet as usual, but he expressed his wonder that in spite of his crusade against idolatry, people should still ask him to the *Puja*. But he seemed at once to have felt that it was merely a social function that he was asked to perform, so he wanted me to go to Radha Prasad his eldest son. Radha Prasad had no objection to the religious practices of our people, and he accepted the invitation, and treated me to some sweets and fruits.

"Talking of fruits, I am just reminded of the fact that the Raja had good many fruit-trees in his garden at Manicktola. These would often tempt me there. The *lichies* were a great attraction to me. I would often go to eat *lichies*. Whenever the Raja saw me roving in the fearful sun of May and June, among the *lichie* trees, he would call me to him, saying, "Brother, come here, I shall give you as many *lichies* as you want, why do you walk in the sun?" and would ask the gardener to bring the ripest fruits for me.

"Once he asked me, I remember, if I ate meat; and advised me to tell my father to have a little meat during dinner every day. "The plant," he used to say, "must be watered, or the tree will not grow to its proper stature. So it is with this body, you must feed it well, and that up from your youth." He took great care of his health himself, looking upon the body as a precious gift of God.

"Ram Mohun Roy had the characteristic humility of all great men in him. There was no end of visitors to his

house. Many would go to hold theological disputations with him, but few indeed of these were foemen worthy of his steel. They would mostly bore him by their irregular and irrelevant talk. But he could never ask any one to leave him. He would listen to all with due courtesy. When, however, he felt that he could not bear the foolish talk any more, he would propose a stroll in his garden, saying,—“What do you say to our taking a walk in the garden.” And once upon his legs, his visitor would find it hard to keep pace with him,—he was such a wonderful walker,—and would be forced to take leave of him.

“Talking of the Raja’s garden I may just tell you that it was laid out by his Mali, Ramdas. He was very much attached to the Raja and went with him to England. You may be interested to know that this Ramdas served me also for some time. On his return from England he served the Maharaja of Burdwan for many years, as the Head Gardener of the Maharaja’s *Golab-Baug*. He also laid out the garden of my *Santi-Niketan* at Bolpur.

“The Raja had something in him by which he could draw all sorts of people unto him. He exercised a most mysterious influence over me. I was then a mere boy and necessarily had little opportunity of talking to him. But his very face had an attraction for me such as no other face ever had. The Raja had a carriage. It was a poor, rickety thing. The horse had no regular trappings, and ropes would oftentimes do duty for harness. Sometimes, as the Raja drove out, the horse would get off from the carriage, and the carriage would be divorced from its compass; and occasionally the whole thing would go to such pieces that its famous owner and occupant would have to leave it in the presence of large crowds of sight-seers. On one occasion, I remember the Raja telling me, as he came by one of these misadventures, that his horse and carriage had made a clown of him.

"I used to drive with the Raja now and again in this carriage. No words passed between us generally during these drives. I would only sit in front of him, looking on his beautiful face, which had such a deep attraction for me. In fact, for the greater portion of these drives, I would be almost absolutely absorbed in the contemplation of the Raja, being insensible to all that might be going on the road side. I would sit as quiet as a doll, looking only at the Raja, and my heart would overflow with a deep but indescribable emotion. There evidently was some mystic relation between the Raja and myself. I was always so powerfully drawn by him.

"I have told you of the incident that occurred when I went one day to invite him to the Puja festivities. The way in which he cried out—"Ask me to the Pujah,"—and the words that he uttered, his countenance aglow with deep emotion. These have had a wonderful influence upon me all my life. Those words became to me even as the Mantra of a spiritual master, as my *Guru-Vakya* (गुरु वाक्य) and led me to give up idolatry. Those words are still ringing in my ears, and they have been my guide all through this long life.

"When the Brahma Samaj was established, I used now and again to go there, but always stealthily. Bistoo used to lead the choir then as now. Bistoo had an elder brother, Kisto by name, who also sang with Bistoo in Ram Mohun Roy's Samaj; while a Mahomedan, Golam Abbas, used to play on the *Pakhoas*. One of the most favourite Hymns of the Raja was that commencing with the words:—

### बिगत विशेषं

*Bigata bisesham.* Bistoo used to sing it in his sweet voice. The dear old tune is still ringing in my ears.

"Talking of the Brahma Samaj, in those days there were no benches and chairs in the Brahma Samaj. People going there would squat in right national fashion on carpets covered with white cotton sheets. The Raja would sit on a small bamboo-and-cane stool—a *moda*.

“On the day of the Samaj, the friends of the Raja would meet in his Garden-House at Manicktola; and then they would all walk in a procession to the place of worship in Jorasanko. The Raja had peculiar feelings on the subject. He used to say, ‘When a man goes to a holy place he does not, in this country, go in a carriage, why should we then, when going to the Holiest of the Holy, go in carriages, we must walk.’ But though he would walk to the Samaj, he would not use ordinary *dhoti* and *chadar*, but put on court-dress on all such occasions. The Raja had a great regard for the externals of Moslem civilisation. His idea, again, was that God being man’s King and Master, in going to His Court, he must dress himself properly; must appear before Him as one fit to be present at the Court of the Prince of Princes. He had imbibed this idea also from the Mahomedans. So all his friends would go, duly dressed, like himself, to the Samaj. My father, however, formed an exception. He would always go to the Brahma Samaj in *dhoti* and *chadar*. The Raja would not quite like it; and would look askance at my father, sometimes even disparagingly pointing him out to his friend and disciple, Babu Annada Prasad Banerjee (Zamindar of Telinipará). Babu Annada Prasad was on very familiar terms with the Raja, and would oftentimes reply to his signs and gestures by telling him in plain language, that if he had not the courage to speak directly to my father on the subject, he had better not trouble him with it. Babu Annada Prasad, however, would draw my father’s attention to the subject of his dress, but my father would invariably reply—“Having to spend the whole day in my office-dress, I cannot again put me to the trouble and inconvenience of using it in the evenings, especially when I have to come and worship God, to whom we should always appear in the simplest and humblest garb.”

Reverting, once more to his personal relations with the Raja, the Maharshi said :—



“There was some mystic affinity between the Raja and myself. He did not instruct me by words. I was much too young, in fact, to receive any such instructions from him, but still, as I have already said, he exerted a most mysterious influence upon me. I got my inspiration to work for the cause, for which he himself had lived and laboured, from him. When going to England, the Raja came to pay my father his farewell visit. All the members of our family and a large number of our neighbours had gathered in our spacious court-yard to bid goodbye to the Raja. I was, however, not there. And though I was then a mere stripling, the Raja wanted to see me very particularly, telling my father that he could not leave the country without shaking hands with me. So I was sent for, and the Raja shook hands with me, and then left for England. That kindly grasp had a force and meaning in it which I realised only in my later life.

“When the news of Ram Mohun Roy's death came I was by my father, and he began to weep like a boy. I, too, was moved with a deep emotion. For though I had but little fellowship with him, and though I got no instructions from him in words, his face, and his whole personality was deeply engraved on my heart. He was my inspiration.

“He lived only for a year in Calcutta after the establishment of the Samaj. The fire that he had kindled was, however, kept up by Pundit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish. He, too, was a most extraordinary man. He had love for God, and love for Ram Mohun Roy. The two loves were closely intertwined, one with the other, in the heart and character of Ram Chandra Vidyabagish; and this accounts for his unrivalled loyalty to the Brahma Samaj at a time its very life was despaired of. In those days the Brahma Samaj had hardly any congregation. If the weather was bad, Ram Chandra Vidyabagish would combine Minister and Congregation both in himself. The rich people that had gathered themselves round the Raja's banner in his life-time, dispersed

directly the news of his death got to Calcutta. A few middle-class men attended the Samaj, whose Weekly Congregation would mostly be made up of straggling wayfarers, some of whom would peep in, with their bazar baskets, and others with their pet parrots. Ram Chandra Vidyabagish would sit on a broad wooden stool—a *Taktaposh*, while his little Congregation would squat on the floor, on carpets and sheets. I mean to re-establish it in the Samaj as soon as the present repairs are completed. I wish to move back to the ways of Raja Ram Mohun Roy in these matters. We have converted the Brahma Samaj into an English Church. This must be corrected. People must leave their shoes off during Prayers. It is not proper to convert our Samaj into an English Church.”

Gradually the conversation began to approach more recent times; the Maharshi's relations with Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, his conflicts with Keshub Chandra Sen, and so on. Just at this point his break-fast, containing a cup of pomegranate juice and some fruits, was announced, and finding that we had all that we could possibly have from him concerning Ram Mohun Roy, we rise to make our obeisance to him and bid him goodbye.



RAJÁ RAM MOHUN ROY,

AS

A JURIST AND A POLITICIAN.

BY

N. N. GHOSH, Esq.,

*Barrister-at-Law.*

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CALCUTTA:

1896.



RAM MOHUN ROY—AS A JURIST  
AND A POLITICIAN.

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It is a remarkable proof of the Raja's versatility that such of his writings, as it has been possible to trace, on subjects connected with law and politics, exhibit deep research, accurate knowledge, clearness of conception, and a firm grasp of principles. His paper entitled *Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindoo Law of Inheritance*, may be cited as an illustration. Here the writer comes to the conclusion, as the result of his researches, that under the old Hindoo Law women enjoyed rights which have been presented in a very much narrower form by modern Commentators. "These restraints on female inheritance," the writer is shrewd enough to observe, "encourage, in a great degree, polygamy, a frequent source of the greatest misery in native families; a grand object of Hindoos being to secure a provision for their male offspring, the Law which relieves them from the necessity of giving an equal portion to their wives, removes a principal restraint on the indulgence of their inclinations in respect to the number they marry." Within the present limits it is not possible to refer in detail to the evidence cited by the writer or to dwell on the keenness of the insight he exhibits into the causes of a social evil. His *Essay on the Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property according to the Law of Bengal*, would do credit to any trained and professional lawyer deeply versed in the history of the Hindoo Law. One of his conclusions in this paper is that in following those expositions which best reconcile law with reason, the author of the Bengal system is warranted by the highest sacred

authority as well as by the example of the most revered of his predecessors, the author of the *Mitakshara*.

The Rule and Ordinance that was passed on the 14th March, 1823, by Mr. Adam, Officiating Governor-General, curtailing the freedom of the Press, elicited a Memorial to the Supreme Court which had to register the Regulation. The Memorial, which was signed by several leading gentlemen of the town, was presumably drawn up by the Raja, who was one of its signatories. This proved unsuccessful, and a Petition of Appeal was addressed to His Majesty the King (George IV) in Council. This Petition also appears to have been the Raja's handiwork. The two documents are remarkable productions. For cogency of argument, accuracy of fact, and appreciation of principle, they could not be surpassed. No writer at the present day could put the case for liberty more effectively than the Raja has done. Space will not permit the making of any extracts, specially where a selection is difficult from among paragraphs almost every one of which is a gem rich and rare. The writings on Sutte, which one might *a priori* imagine to be so warm and vehement as to be devoid of balance, are themselves an illustration of the Raja's unfailing sobriety and clearness of vision. Nowhere does he plead that every practice which is morally wrong has to be repressed by penal legislation. The issue he sets forth is clear and definite. He abstains, as far as possible, from the enunciation of abstract doctrines of sweeping generality, confines himself to the consideration of practical evils, material wrongs, and argues in effect that a practice which is not merely immoral, but criminal, must be treated as a crime. Whatever is productive of injury to the individual, and, through the individual, to the Society, is criminal and should be dealt with as such, all usage to the contrary notwithstanding. That appears to be the substance of the Raja's contention, and it will hardly be resisted by the most fastidious philosopher of the *laissez faire* type. The breadth of

the Raja's knowledge of the administration of the country, the accuracy of his insight, and the soundness of his opinions on many questions of Government, are well illustrated by his answers to the numerous questions put to him by the Select Committee of the House of Commons. It was certainly no ordinary person that could show as complete and masterly a knowledge of the practical operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India, and of the general character and condition of its native inhabitants, as he undoubtedly possessed of the *Upanishads* and of the Precepts of Jesus.



RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,

AS

A MAN OF LETTERS.

BY

BABU MOHINI MOHUN CHATTERJEE, M.A., B.Li

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CALCUTTA :

1896.

## RAM MOHUN ROY—AS A MAN OF LETTERS.

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FORMS of expression, though important, do not afford, by themselves, an adequate criterion for judging a literary or generally as artistic character. *Techniqu* is great, but the idea underlying the subject is greater. Ram Mohun Roy's culture was so many-sided, his scholarship so wide and profound, his natural gifts so rare, that anxious thought and close study are needed for a proper appreciation of his position as a man of letters.

Considering the varied character of his writings, one is struck by his sturdy faith in his art as an engine of human progress. Primers of Grammar and Geography, and abstruse Treatise on Law, Politics and Theology are alike members of his literary family. From popular songs to unpopular science, his literary hospitality is extended. His love of knowledge, in its multiform aspects, beams out of his writings with equal radiance. As witness, his letter on English Education addressed to Lord Amherst. His motto may well have been the words of Gœthe "Licht meir Licht"—Light, more Light.

His controversial writings are instinct with a singular love of truth and a reverence for freedom of thought. In form they are the productions of a scholar and a gentleman. Not a word, not a syllable has he written for mere effect or to hurt an antagonist's feelings. His method was justified by the result—conversion by controversy. Ram Chandra Vidyavagîsh and Dr. Adam were the fruits of his labours in this field. Read his *Appeals to the Christian Public* and judge. The filial piety of Mr. Marshman finds an apology for his father; but Ram Mohun Roy has never needed one. "With the exception of this deviation from liberality, (on the part of Dr. Marshman), remarks Dr. Rees in his Preface to the American Edition of the *Precepts of*

*Jesus*, "the controversy on both sides has been throughout conducted with a spirit of Christian candour and fairness." The following words of Ram Mohun himself indicate the spirit of his controversial writings better than any thing one might say :—"I hope it will not be presumed that I intend to establish the preference of my faith over that of other men. The result of controversy on such a subject, however multiplied, must be ever unsatisfactory, for the reasoning faculty, which leads men to certainty in things within its reach, produces no effect on questions beyond its comprehension."

Sincerity, according to Carlyle, is the test of heroism. A prominent quality of Ram Mohun Roy's writings is his transparent sincerity, which indeed is but the outward manifestation of his love of truth. He has not said a word that he did not feel to be true. In religion he discarded esotericism in every form and did not believe in deceiving the multitude for their own good. "By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct," he says, "I, born a Brahmun, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong and whose temporal advantage depends on the present system. But these, however, accumulated, I can tranquilly bear, trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice, perhaps acknowledged with gratitude." However severe may be the tests applied, his literary honesty will come out the purer and brighter from the fire. He never misrepresents or misunderstands his antagonists. The whole of his writings will be scanned in vain for a single instance of imputing to his adversary an opinion for the sole glory of demolishing it. He takes his opponents at their best. Scriptural texts, cited or relied on by him, are never mutilated, wrenched from context or divorced from their authorized meaning. Who will say, with the experience of our own days, that such honesty,

which ought to be ordinary, is not deserving of extraordinary praise? Ram Mohun Roy has never allowed rhetoric to master logic or passion sobriety. The *Tukfatul Muwakkidin*, in so far as one can judge to whom the original is inaccessible, is a model of close logical reasoning. His highest praise is this, that there is not a line of fine writing in all his works.

In the political writings of Ram Mohun Roy, one is impressed by the dutiful care with which he avoids making a statement not resting on his own experience or legitimate inferences arising from it. In concluding his answers to questions on *The Judicial System of India*, he says :—"In preparing my replies to these queries, I have not been biassed by the opinions of any individual, nor have I consulted with any person or men, or referred to any work on the subject of India. I have, for the facts, consulted only my own recollections; and in regard to the opinions expressed, I have been guided only by my conscience."

An attentive student of the writings of Ram Mohun Roy finds on every page the stamp of thoroughness, sobriety, straightforwardness and modesty. His conscientiousness and sympathy cannot fail to impress the open mind.

The conditions under which this imperfect sketch has been prepared prevents any attempt at adequate treatment of Ram Mohun Roy's form and expression. But the form is worthy of the substance. The stately and dignified prose of his English works calls to mind the masters who adorned English literature in the latter period of the last century and the early years of the present. Since his time many of his countrymen have achieved eminence as writers of English prose, but few have attained such a style of classical purity as Ram Mohun. His expressions may at times offend against the rules of Grammar, but never against the rules of style or taste. Bentham's appreciation of Ram Mohun Roy's English style is too well-known to need reproduction.

RAJA RAM MOHUN RÖY,  
AS  
A THEOLOGIAN.  
BY  
PANDIT SITANATH TATWABHUSHAN.

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CALCUTTA:

1896.

## RAM MOHUN ROY,—AS A THEOLOGIAN.

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RAM MOHUN ROY was, as every one knows, a Theist, a firm believer in, and a devoted worshipper of, the One True God. But his Theism was not an abstract and colourless creed like that of many who profess to be his followers. The universality of religion as a fact having its root deep laid in the nature of man; was an idea which had a strong hold on his mind, and it may even be said that his whole life was devoted to the practical realization of this idea,—to the establishment of a Universal Church of Theism, a Church which should include all worshippers of God irrespective of national and denominational peculiarities. But it cannot escape even the most superficial reader of the Raja's works, that, notwithstanding his admiration for whatever was good and noble in Christianity and Muhamudanism, the type of Theism which he cherished with the deepest love and respect was unmistakably the Hindū type. It was Hindū Theism, as expounded in the *Upanishads* and the *Védānta* Philosophy, and in later works based on these, which gave Ram Mohun Roy the deepest solace in his spiritual struggles, and inspired in him the warmest enthusiasm. It was of the Rishis who laid the foundations of India's National Theism, and the great Sankaracharya, who helped in the revival, development and propagation of this religion after its partial and temporary collapse under the Buddhist ascendancy,—it was of these apostles of the deeper religion of India that the Raja was most fond of speaking, and whose writings and utterances he laboured most strenuously, by various means, to make better known to his countrymen as well as to foreigners. It was not a mere instinctive fondness for what is nearest to one in time and place, it was not a mere feeling

of nationality, neither was it merely the apostolic policy of being all things to all men that led him to bring these repositories of sacred learning to prominence, and appeal to his countrymen in their name. It was evidently a hearty acceptance of their substantial truth, of their value as helps to the attainment of the higher life, that led him to devote the best days of his life to their propagation, and to the vindication of their fundamental teachings against the attacks of a corrupt and degenerate priesthood, and of foreigners who did not appreciate or would not admit their merits. But nevertheless, the great reviver of Hindu Theism in recent times was far from that blind adherence to the letter of scripture which forms, in popular estimation, a part of orthodoxy, both here and elsewhere. He exhorts us now and again to use our reason freely as well as revere the scriptures, in our search after religious truth.

Ram Mohun Roy's freedom from bigotry, from blind adherence to external authority, may be best seen in his method of interpreting the S'astras. By the S'astras, it must be noted, Ram Mohun Roy meant, almost invariably, the Védás, and especially those parts of the Védás which treat of the Supreme Being, namely the *Upanishads*. Unlike the more recent teachers of the Hindu Religion, and following all ancient leaders of Hindu thought, he held these writings as the highest authority in matters pertaining to the National Religion, and considered the Law-Books, Puranas, Itihasas and Tantras as of minor importance, and their teachings as acceptable only when they agreed with those of the Védás. He held that the worship of the various Puranic gods and goddesses by means of images and material offerings was intended only for those pitiable beings whose intellects were utterly incapable of conceiving the formless, infinite One, and rendering him a worship in spirit and in truth. Such people, he says, require something to keep themselves from becoming utterly irreligious and and im-

moral, and idolatry is such an expedient devised by the wise teachers of the National Religion. He did not seem to have any belief in the existence of gods and goddesses either Vedic or Puranic, for he speaks, ever and anon, of these deities being so many powers of the Supreme Being—*allegorically* spoken of by the S'astras as so many personalities. He would not object to the worshipper concentrating his mind on particular objects of nature considered as so many manifestations of the Divine Power, but the worship of distinct gods and goddesses he considered to be unworthy of intelligent and thoughtful men, and as expressly opposed to the teachings of the Védás. The Raja was of course far from thinking that the later writers on the Hindu Religion were all aware of the allegorical character of the gods and goddesses of the National Pantheon. In fact, he does not conceal his contempt for these writers and their superstitions. But as regards the higher Puranas and Tantras, he seems to have penetrated the gorgeous imagery that clothes their thoughts and reached the fundamental principles underlying their teachings. These teachings he found to be identical with those of the Upanishads, and, as such, he recognized their value. But on the whole he seems to have had scanty sympathy with the attempts of these writers to popularize the teachings of the S'astras—attempts which had led them to be utterly misunderstood, and to a wholesale degradation of the national religion.

Ram Mohun Roy's religion was, therefore, what may be called, and what he himself called, Hindu Theism, the Theism inculcated in works, chiefly Védic, which have been held in the highest estimation by the nation from time immemorial. To bring this religion out of the rubbish of superstition and priestcraft that had accumulated upon it during centuries of ignorance, to propagate its noble and profound literature throughout the country, to let its blessings be enjoyed, not merely by the learned, but even by those ignorant of the



sacred language of the country, to free it from the peculiarities of the times and conditions of life in the midst of which it had originated and been developed, and to present it in a form that should suit the changed conditions of individual and national life—this was the object of Ram Mohun Roy's life-long labours as a Theologian. It is not perhaps generally thought, by those who are trying to revive the National Religion, that Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the first Hindu Revivalist, in the truest sense of the term. He it was who, in recent times, first drew the attention of his countrymen to the hidden truth and life-giving power of the religion of India's noblest sons, after their successors had been fed with husks for centuries by its selfish leaders, and at a time when those who had imbibed the influences of English education were looking for life and light to the religion of their teachers and rulers. Ram Mohun Roy sought to revive just what could and can be revived—what can bear the light and heat of the day, and not what could not, by any means, be made to live. If the present generation of Revivalists could be made to understand this and to recognise him as their natural leader, instead of ignoring him and arraying themselves against him, their well-meant efforts might meet with a surer success than they have hitherto done.

The Raja saw that the Theism of the Védás was not merely a religion to be believed in and practised like Christianity and Islam, but that it was also closely allied to a profound and elaborate system of philosophy, namely the Yédánta. He knew that for the masses, a religion that touched the heart and inspired a zeal for practical righteousness was enough. Védic Theism is, indeed, such a religion. But its peculiarity is that it is not merely a system of faith and practical duties. It is, even in its main source, the *Upanishads*, a philosophy. Its fundamental principles, as set forth in those writings, give unmistakable tokens of their being conclusions arrived at—insights into truth gained by—

a long course of intellectual searching. The *Upanishads* themselves scarcely give us any clue to the reasonings by which the conclusions embodied in them were arrived at. But when it is considered that these conclusions are very much unlike the ordinary deliverances of common sense, and are, in fact, beyond the comprehension of superficial thinkers, and when, moreover, it is seen that the same truths are obtained by independent seekers after truth in ancient and modern times by long courses of thinking, it becomes evident that Vedic Theism has a philosophy at its back. Such a philosophy is the Védānta, which is erroneously identified with the *S'arīraka Sūtras* and Saṅkarācharya's Commentary on the same,—the most revered treatises on the system,—but which is in fact a living and growing system of philosophical thought, putting itself forth in innumerable treatises from the *Upanishads* upwards down to the latest work devoted to the same grand themes that they treated of, and inspired with the same keen search after the one undivided Thought underlying all reality that inspired the Védic seers. Our Raja saw all this very clearly, and, as a worthy son of the Rishis, contributed his part to this grand system of national Thought. He followed the method that so many eminent Hindus had done before. He took up the *Sūtras*, the aphorisms that had guided Védāntic speculation, in fact all orthodox Hindu thought, from time immemorial; he studied Sankara's Commentary, itself a profound system of original thought on the same lines as the *Upanishads* and the *Sūtras*, and gave the result of his studies in the form of a Bengali Commentary on the *Sūtras*. Those who are competent to pronounce judgment on the subject have been heard to say that it is not, as its author modestly declares it to be, an abridgment of Sankara's great Commentary, but an original treatise fit to be mentioned with the great Commentaries that were, and are still, extant,—Commentaries that have formed the basis of whole systems of religious and

philosophical thought, namely those of Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha and others. The originality of the Raja's way of thinking may be best seen by the general reader in the records that have come down to us of his controversies with his Christian opponents. In these the Raja stands out prominently as a defender of philosophical thought on Védántic lines against dogmatic thought of the ordinary Christian stamp. He defends ably the fundamental unity of thought—the sole reality of God—which the Védánta insists upon, against the cavils of ordinary dualistic thinking. Christian missionaries then, as now, had their stock arguments against the Védánta, its supposed tendency to immorality and impiety, since it unified, and thus equalised, all things; its practical denial of creation, since it made the Creator and the created fundamentally one; and so on. Ram Mohun Roy met these objections in a way which showed how deeply he shared the insight of the Hindu sages of old, and how, amidst the dust and smoke of controversy in which he had to pass his days, the social reformer and politician had his feet firm upon the solid rock of fundamental truth—upon the eternal verities of which all that meet the eye are only passing appearances. We have space to make only one extract from the *Brahmanical Magazine* on Maya, which a Christian opponent of the Védánta had set up as superior to God according to that philosophy:—

“Máyá is the power of God, through which the world receives its birth, existence and changes; but no men of learning who are not biassed by partiality would infer from these opinions an idea of the inferiority of God to Máyá, his attribute. For, as men of every tribe and of every country whatsoever acknowledge God to be the cause of the world, they necessarily consider him possessed of the power through which he creates the world. But no one is from this concluded to believe that God is subordinate to that power. God pardons the sins of those that sincerely repent, through his attri-

bute of mercy: this cannot be taken as an admission of the Deity's subjection to his own mercy. The followers of the Védánta say that Mâyá is opposed to knowledge; for when a true knowledge of God is obtained, the effect of Mâyá, which makes the soul appear distinct from God, does immediately cease. The term Mâyá implies, primarily, the power of creation, and secondarily, its effect, which is the universe. The Védánta, by comparing the world with the misconceived notion of a snake when a rope really exists, means that the world, like the supposed snake, has no independent existence that it receives its existence from the Supreme Being. In like manner, the Védánta compares the world with a dream: as all objects seen in a dream depend upon the motion of the mind, so the existence of the world is dependent upon the being of God, who is the only object of supreme love: and in declaring that God is all in all, and that there is no other substance except God, the Védánta means that existence in reality belongs to God alone. He is consequently true and omnipresent; nothing else can bear the name of true existence. We find the phrases, God is all and in all, in the Christian books; and I suppose they do not mean by such words that pots, mats, etc., are gods. I am inclined to believe that by these terms they mean the omnipresence of God. Why do you attempt, by cavils, to find fault with the Védánta?"

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,  
AS  
AN EDUCATIONIST.  
BY  
BABU MANMATHA NATH DUTT, M.A., M.R.A.S.

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CALCUTTA:

1896.

## RAM MOHUN ROY—AS AN EDUCATIONIST.

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ALL right-thinking men in the country are at the present day sufficiently alive to the good that has been done to India by the introduction and spread of English education. India has glorious traditions—India has a splendid literature of her own. In India civilization dawned before other nations of the world came into being. All this is true no doubt; but England will always have the credit of rescuing her from a dreadful oblivion into which she fell before the advent of the English by the positive apathy and antipathies of the preceding eras. Whatever might have been the views of foreign nations regarding India in the earlier years of the British rule, it is an established fact now that she has made an impression—a golden impression never to be effaced—on the western mind, and that her philosophical and religious thought still holds a unique place in the world of thought. A keen interest in her literature, philosophy and ancient civilization is being gradually evinced by the leaders of thought in the West. This has been mainly brought about by the spread of English education in India, which has opened a means of communication between the natives of the soil and its foreign rulers and has become the key to unlock the portals of the grand intellectual treasures imbedded in the literature of Ancient India.

For the early introduction of English education in India, which has been fraught with so many momentous consequences, we are indebted to that great Reformer, Raja Ram Mohun Roy. As, for religious and social reforms, the name of this great son of India has been emblazoned in letters of gold in her history, so also his position as the pioneer of the educational reform in this land will never be forgotten by

posterity. From his fertile brain emanated first the idea that education in India should be imparted through the medium of English, when during the administration of Lord Amherst, the question was being discussed whether Sanskrit, Persian or English should constitute the means of instruction in Indian Schools. Some of the officials were for introducing Persian and Sanskrit as the medium of instruction and others were for English. Raja Ram Mohun's far-sighted and capacious intellect did not fail to perceive at this critical juncture that English should form the means of imparting instruction. He could quite clearly see that without the mastery of a living language the study of the classics would be of no practical value. In his letter addressed to Lord Amherst in 1823, he pointed out clearly the mistake of the introduction of Sanskrit as the medium of instruction and the utility of the study of English. He fully realized the good will of the Government in establishing a new Sanskrit School in Calcutta "a blessing for which they must ever be grateful," but he was equally anxious that "the efforts to promote it should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow in the most useful channels.

He understood full well the value of the study of physical science in the advancement of the civilization of a country. The knowledge of science both practical and theoretical is highly important for the material and intellectual prosperity of a nation. The great seer had before him this view and he wrote :—

"We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the Natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful Sciences which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of the other parts of the world."

Though himself a great Sanskrit and Arabic Scholar,

having always the highest reverence for the excellences of Sanskrit literature, he justly and very correctly understood that mere Sanskrit learning was of no value towards the improvement of the nation. With the advance of civilization all the countries of the world are approaching one another. We have now improved facilities of communication. Networks of railways, fast running steamers and diverse other means have been opened up all over the world. Besides, free-trade is every day bringing into closer relation the various nations of the world. The tendency of modern civilization is to find out a common medium of intercourse between all countries. And it has not been unwisely suggested that "pigeon English" is likely to serve the purpose, as English is now spoken over the greater part of the world.

The great Hindu Reformer understood the fully and advocated very strongly the introduction of English. He very wisely wrote that by learning Sanskrit only "the pupils would acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the adoption of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men, such as are already commonly taught in all parts of India. Besides, Sanskrit learning is so difficult that almost a life-time is necessary for its acquisition."

But while speaking in favour of the introduction of English he did not deprecate Sanskrit learning. He wrote, "If it were thought necessary to perpetuate this language for the sake of the valuable information it contains, this should be accomplished by other means—namely by holding out premiums and granting certain allowances to eminent Pandits who have already undertaken to teach on their account." This wise suggestion of the Raja has, after such a long time, arrested the attention of the Government and it is on this line that the Government has sanctioned some money for the maintenance of Sanskrit toles.

The political value of English education, which the leaders



of thought in our country have so greatly appreciated, was not lost sight of by this great thinker, and he wrote :—

“In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if such had been the policy of the British Legislature.

It is not by merely placing a fruitful education scheme before the country that he advanced the educational cause of India, but he gave a practical proof of his views by taking a prominent part along with Sir Edward Hyde East and David Hare in the establishment of the Hindu College. After a fight and discussion extending over a number of years, Raja Ram Mohun succeeded in introducing English as the medium of imparting instruction in Indian schools. By his great talent and energy, far-sightedness and intelligence, the great Ram Mohun laid the foundation of the future well-being of India. What the country has achieved now through the spread of English education and what it has been achieving gradually, politically, socially and intellectually, is all owing to the talent and exertions of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE NATIONAL  
IN  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,  
BY  
BABU BEPÍN CHANDRA PAL.

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CALCUTTA:

1896.

## THE UNIVERSAL AND THE NATIONAL

IN

RAM MOHUN ROY.

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ONCE hears a good deal now about universalism. But unless we identify the catholicity of the great Akbar with the modern ideal represented by the term universalism, the earliest apostle of it, at any rate, in modern times, was undoubtedly Raja Ram Mohun Roy; and as yet, I believe, he stands as one of its greatest apostles. It is this transcendental universalism of the Raja that gained for him the admiration of some of the brightest intellects of his time, in England, as it draws all sects and denominations of his own countrymen to-day.

The universalism of the Raja found the most prominent expression in his treatise on Universal Religion, which is reproduced elsewhere, and in the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj. In fact, to understand the real meaning of the Trust Deed, one should read it by the light of his tract on Universal Religion. In the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj, the Raja says that persons of all sects and denominations shall be allowed to meet together to worship God, the common Father of all; and in his tract on Universal Religion, he explains who this God is and how he is to be worshipped. In his universalism, the Raja took his stand upon the definition of God or Brahman as given in the *Brahma Sutras*, viz.,—from whom are the birth, etc., of this world, he is Brahman, and the *Taittiriya Sruti*, which says—He from whom all these objects proceed, having proceeded in whom they live, and towards whom, at the time of final dissolution, they go and into whom they enter, is Brahman, know him particularly. This is what Sanskrit Philosophy calls *Tatasthalakshanam*, or definition through inference. This inferential definition of God

is the most broad, and admits, therefore, of being applied to almost all objects of human worship. In fact, the Raja clearly makes the widest application of it in his treatise on *Universal Religion*. And it was on this inferential definition of God, that the universalism of Raja Ram Mohun Roy was based, and it was on this broad and catholic platform, which he called the Brahma Samaj, that he wanted to bring together for purposes of divine worship and human fellowship, men of all creeds and sects. And none may deny that a universal church—a common place of worship for all men, to whatever sect or denomination they may belong, can only be established by defining God as simply the Author and Governor of the universe; and by worshipping him only as such and in no other relation.

To bring together all creeds, one must himself rise above creed. The Brahma Samaj, as founded by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, therefore, laid down no creed, imposed no declaration of faith on its adherents, but simply called upon them to leave aside, for the moment, their personal peculiarities or denominational notions and to be joined with one another in the contemplation of the Author and Governor of the universe, as their common Father and Master.

But while it is possible to found a House of Prayer such as the Brahma Samaj was in the days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, on this colourless universalism, it is not possible to build any sect or organise a community upon such a foundation. And it must be said to the credit of Raja Ram Mohun Roy that he went in for neither. His Brahma Samaj was not a sect, was not a community, but a simple Meeting House for the worship of God in an absolutely non-denominational form. And this very act shows the greatness of the Raja's genius.

He was born at a period of the world's history when an irrational kind of universalism rode triumphant all over the civilized countries. The French Illumination was then in the very zenith of its glory. And one of the foremost

ideals of the French Illumination was to establish a sort of universalism that should destroy all the ancient and time-honoured landmarks of tradition and custom,—distinctions of name and peculiarities of expression that differentiate both individuals from individuals and nations from nations. The dream of the latter end of the eighteenth century was the building up of a cosmopolitan society and a universal state where all were to be equal, and which should leave no room for any distinction or differentiation. It was the natural offspring of the ideal of an insane individualistic philosophy that dominated very largely the thought of the last century. Ram Mohun Roy, though a most ardent advocate of equality—we know how, when on his way to England, he came by a mishap that inflicted a permanent injury on him by making him lame for the rest of his days, in going to pay his respects to the banner of the French Republic, on board a French vessel,—though his love for the cause of freedom was so deep and real that he gave a public dinner in Calcutta in commemoration of the emancipation of the principality of Naples from the yoke of foreign dominion,—he never was an advocate of this sort of insane individualism. In this very treatise on *Universal Religion*, to which we have already referred, he distinctly says that this kind of “selfwilled individualism is opposed both by Scriptures and by reason.” In fact, all his methods of reform, whether social, political, or religious, prove that his was a most rational and proper kind of universalism. It was not a mere abstraction, but an ideal that necessarily had to formulate itself through a variety of local and national limitations.

Indeed one cannot form a correct estimate of the genius of the Raja, or get an accurate view of his ideals, unless one reads his universalism by the light of his nationalism, and his nationalism by the light of his universalism. The universalism that violently tears itself away from national institutions and vehicles, and seeks thus to set up a natural

antagonism with nationalism, is a pure myth: and when it sets to itself the task of the reformer, it becomes worse—a dangerous delusion. The universal and the particular are, in all rational systems of thought, regarded only as two moments of one complete whole. The universal is nothing unless it articulates itself through some particular; on the other hand, the particular loses all movement, that is all life, when it divorces the universal. The universal can only take legitimate shape among a people through the national and traditional institutions of that people; that is the one only method of the realisation of universal ideals by a people. National institutions also can grow and escape stagnation, decay and death only by an unceasing expansiveness and adaptability born of an equally unceasing apprehension of the universal. This essential unity between the universal and the particular, between God and man, between humanity and nationality, between socialism and individualism, was the central truth of the system of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. His work, whether in Theology or Religion, Ethics or Politics, was, therefore, always constructive and not destructive. His appeals were, therefore, always to the voice of reason within, which, when purified by proper processes, transmits really the voice of God,—and to the scriptures without, which, in spite of differences and discrepancies, are yet the repositories of the highest spiritual experiences of the race. His appreciation of the past, as I said elsewhere, on another occasion, was of the highest, his apprehension of the needs of the present was also of the keenest. He neither ignored the past nor mistrusted the present, but seeing the development of a divine purpose in the past as well as in the present, he estimated both at their right value and sought to engraft the present reforms on past traditions and realise the spirit that was in those past traditions more fully and completely than ever, through the changed forms of the present.

HINTS ON THE STUDY  
OF  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY,  
BY  
BABU BRAJENDRA NATH SIL, M.A.

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CALCUTTA:

1896.

HINTS ON THE STUDY  
OF  
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.

*a.—Formative Influences—Sources and Origin.*

AS a general introduction to a critical study and estimate of the Raja's works, I may note that his intellectual ancestry must be sought in four different representative cultures of the world's history.

(1) The whole body of Hindu culture and civilisation with the pre-eminent exception of the primitive stage of Nature worship as represented in the Samhita portions of the Védás.

(2) The various schools and sects of Arabic Philosophy and Theology,—Aristotle's logical moulds and forms of thought in which were cast the material of the Koran and Shariyat—especially the heterodox sects among whom may be mentioned the Mutazalas, the Sufis, the Muwahidís, and, perhaps, also the masonic body of the sincere Brethren, the 'Encyclopædists' of the 18th century.

(3) The eighteenth century movement of Rationalism represented by the English Deists and Free-Thinkers, the sceptics Hume and Gibbon, the French Encyclopædists, and especially the religious sect of the French Theo-Philanthropists associated with the names of Voltaire and Volney—movements ultimately traceable through Locke's Philosophy to Bacon's Protest against Authority and the Baconian Method of Induction.

(4) Lastly, Christian Theology and Philosophy, Old as well as New Testament culture—in the entire range of its historic origin and development.

*b.—The Two Ram Mohun Roys.*

AT the outset, I would sound a note of warning against the indiscriminate use of the rich but heterogenous materials presented in the Raja's works. For a right understanding and estimate of the Raja's thought and utterance, it is necessary to bear in mind the two essentially distinct but equally indispensable parts which the Raja played on the historic stage. There was Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the Cosmopolite, the Rationalist Thinker, the Representative Man with a universal outlook on human civilization and its historic march ;



a Brahmin of the Brahmins, and Cheirophan moralising from the commanding height of some Eiffel Tower on the far-seen vistas and outstretched prospects of the world's civilization, Jeremy Bentham's admired and dearly loved collaborator in the service of mankind; the peer of the Humes, the Gibbons, the Voltaires, the Volneys, the Diderots or any Free-Thinker or Rationalist of them all. For him, all idols were broken and the parent of illusions, Authority, had been hacked to pieces. He, the Cosmopolite, was daunted by no speculative doubts, discouraged by no craven fears. For him, the Veil of Isis was torn; the Temple had been rent in twain and the Holy of Holies lay bare to his gaze! For he had had his disillusionment, was indeed a thorough *roue* of the *monde* (or *demimonde*) intellectual. Calmly, fearlessly, truthfully, he probed, fathomed, dissected. And by deep meditation and brooding he had won a glimpse of the Truth.

But there was another and equally characteristic part played by the Raja—the part of the Nationalist Reformer, the constructive practical social legislator,—the Renovator of National Scriptures and Revelations. For the Raja was cast in Nature's regal mould. His was the work of half a dozen giants. His name was Legion. Hindoo Pandit, Zaburdasht Moulavie, Christian Padree, the Rishi of a new Manwantara or Yuga, the Imam or Mahdi of a new Tradition, the Prophet or Nabi of a Newer Dispensation—by what name shall I call this man?

*c.—Various Aspects of the Raja's work.*

YES, the Raja carried on single-handed the work of Nationalist Reform and Scripture Renovation and Interpretation for three such different cultures and civilisations as the Hindu, the Christian and the Mahomedan. Unfortunately the Manzaratul Adiyani and other Arabic and Persian works in which the Raja developed his scheme of Moslem religious or socio-religious restoration are lost. But his later writings dealing with the Hindu and Christian Scriptures remain, and are an endless mine of the most precious material to the student of Comparative Religion, Sociology and Ethnology.

The Raja's work falls under the following heads—

I. Raja Ram Mohun Roy—the Cosmopolite, Rationalist, Universalist, standing aloof from ethnic, national, historic limitations and embodiments.

Under this head I note the following divisions:—

(1). As a Rationalist, Deist, Theo-Philanthropist, Universalist.

This is the predominant element of the *Tuhfatool Muwahhiddin* stage of the Raja's mental history, and an element which, however, subsequently enriched, embodied, and clothed in particularities, throughout remained at the bottom of all the Raja's deepest and most characteristic thought.

(2). As a Sociologist—with special reference to Politics, Jurisprudence, Ethics, Economics, and Education, (both pure and applied, theoretical and practical).

(3). As the founder, in a very real sense of the term, of the Science of Comparative Religion, and the classification and development of Religion.

To this Cosmopolitan or Universalistic department of the Raja's work belongs the founding of the *Brahmo Somaj* which by its Trust-Deed was to be a Meeting-House of the Worshippers of the One God, whether members of Hindu, Mahomedan, Christian or other communities. The Raja's *Somaj* was a Meeting-House, a Congregation of Worshippers, but had no direct social significance whatever.

II. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the Practitioner, the Religious and Social Reformer—the Nationalist reforming national scriptures and national customs on national lines, by the methods of liberal interpretation, historic restoration and renovation, and the reconciliation of Authority with Reason and social well-being.

Under this head will come:—

(1). The Raja as a Hindu Reformer, Religious as well as Social; a Restorer of Hindu Scriptural Truth and Revelation.

(2). The Raja as a Christian Reformer, the Interpreter and Reformer of Christian Scriptural Truth and Revelation.

*d.—Classification of the Raja's Works.*

THE Raja's works written from the Cosmopolitan or Universalist or Rational point of view.

*Prārthanā, Patra, Brahmopasanā* Trust-Deed, *Brahma Sangit*, English Prefaces to the English Translations of the *Upanishads*, Preface to the *Precepts of Jesus*.

"Reasons of a Hindu for frequenting Unitarian Places of Worship." "Letter on the Prospects of a Unitarian Christian Mission." "*Tuhfatool Muwahhiddin*" (early stage).

"Letter on Education," "Petitions in connection with the Liberty of the Press."

The Raja's "Evidence before the Select Committee of the Parliament," "The Essay on Stridhan," "The Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property," etc.

## II. The Raja's works as a Religious Reformer and Scripture-Restorer.

(1). The Raja's works touching Hindu Religious or Socio-Religious matters.

These may be brought under the following heads:—

(a) The Raja's real and rational views put in a Hindu garb (e.g., Shastric authorities alluded to in *Brahmopāsanā*, Prefaces to the Bengali Translations of the Upanishads, etc.)

(b) What the Raja really thought was the meaning of pure and original Hindu Scriptures (the work of restoration and renovation). Here the Raja took his stand on the Upanishads (Védás) and the Védánta Sutras (authoritative redaction of the Védás) as Hindu Scripture or Revelation, e.g., *Védánta-sāra*, *Védánta-Bhāshya*, *Upanishadūdi*, *Vajrasuchi*, etc.

N. B.—Here the Raja, taking his stand on the Hindu Scriptures, accepts the infallibility of the Vedas, the doctrine of Absolute Monism (*Advaitavad*), of Maya, of Metempsychosis, of Karma, and also, for purposes of reconstruction, the outward myths and paraphernalia of Vedantism. He, however, interprets those doctrines in a truthful and suggestive way, or makes them non-essential matters. It must be remembered that the Raja philosophically accepted the doctrines of *Advaitavad*, *Mayavad*, and possibly also of Re-incarnation, (though this is made non-essential). These doctrines were so interpreted as to make them consistent with the rational and ethical basis of Religion and Society.

(c) Controversies and discussions with Hindu sectarians, such as Vaishnavas, Saktas, etc.

Also the Raja's propagandā of Hindu Socio-Religious Reform, e.g., *Chari-Prasār Uttar*, *Pathya Pradān*, *Goswami sahī Vichar*, *Kavitakarār sahī Vichar*, etc., (conducted in Bengali); also *Sati-Dāha vishayak Prāvandha* (English as well as Bengali).

Here the Raja's rationalism is apparently at its weakest. For, not only the Védás, but also the Smritis, Puranas and Tantras are employed as sacred authorities by the Raja quite in accordance with the Hindu canons of scriptural interpretation. While express Hindu doctrines such as Avatar (Incarnation and Partial Incarnation) are recognised and sacred authors admitted for the well-known Puranas, etc., the Raja interprets them all so as to make them compatible with the purest rationalism. For example, Incarnation is shown by Shastric authorities to be inapplicable to God, but only to the created and perishable gods and goddesses; and belief in the existence of the latter as higher degrees of finite beings is deprived of all religious or spiritual significance, and

thus reduced to harmlessness. A Hand-Book of Hinduism according to the Raja, giving the substance of his redactions of all Hindu scriptures (including Puranas and Tantras), his proofs and authorities, and his interpretations, would prove extremely useful in the present age, and may be prepared on the basis of works of this and the preceding-class (*b* and *c*).

(*d*) Works defending Hindu Scriptures and their teachings from Christian (Missionary) attack, *e.g.*, *Brahmanical Magazine*, *Letters of Ram Dass*.

Here the Raja attempts a rational exposition and harmony (*Samanvay*) of the Hindu Philosophical Systems, and turns the table skilfully against orthodox (Missionary) Christianity. These works stand next to (*a*) in point rationalism and freedom of judgment.

(2). The Raja's works touching the Christian Religion.

(*a*) The Raja's views in a Christian garb, *i.e.*, invested with the authority of the Christian Scriptures, *e.g.*, *Precepts of Jesus*.

(*b*) and (*c*). What the Raja thought was really the meaning of the original Christian Scriptures (the work of Christian Restoration and Interpretation) and his controversies with the missionaries.

This work of Christian Restoration has borne fruit in helping forward the movement of Unitarian Christianity, so much so that the Raja holds a high and honoured place with Price, Priestly, Channing in the history of that movement.

Here that Raja, accepting the infallibility of the Bible, has to admit miracles including Resurrection, Mediatorship and Saviourship of Christ, his supremacy over all creatures, his pronouncing final doom or judgment, etc. He, however, seeks to disprove from the Bible the Divinity or dual nature of Christ, and the Trinity of the Godhead; and also the doctrines of Vicarious Atonement and Imputation. The miracles are ignored as non-religious and the Mediatorship and Saviourship explained in such a way as to become comparatively harmless from the rationalist's point of view, and as compatible with the latter as possible. (*e.g.*, *The Three Appeals to the Christian Public*, *The Missionary and Chinese Converts*, etc.) The latter, a master-piece of Satire quite worthy of Voltaire at his best.

The Raja was so doctrinaire. He had a wholesome historical instinct, a love of concrete embodiments and institutions, such as characterise the born religious and social reformer. A rationalist and universalist in every pulse of his

being, he was no believer in the cult of the worship of Reason of naked Logical Abstractions. The universal guiding principle of the Love, of God and man he sought and found in the Scriptures of the nations, and rose from the barren religion of Nature or Theo-Philanthropy of his eighteenth century predecessors to a liberal interpretation and acceptance of the Historic Revelation and Scriptures, not indeed in any supernatural sense, but as emodiments of the collective sense, of races of mankind, and as conserving and focussing that principle of Authority, which, in this mundane state, is an indispensable cement and foundation, an elementary factor of communal life, whether in the social, the political or the religious sphere.

"I have often lamented," says the Raja, "that in our general researches into theological truth, we are subject to the conflict of so many obstacles. When we look to the traditions of ancient nations, we often find them at variance with each other; and when discouraged by this circumstance we appeal to reason as a surer guide, we soon find how incompetent it is alone to conduct us to the object of our pursuit. We often find that instead of facilitating our endeavours or clearing up our perplexities, it only serves to generate an universal doubt incompatible with principles on which our comfort and happiness mainly depend. The best method perhaps is neither to give ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other, by a proper use of the lights furnished by both endeavour to improve our intellectual and moral faculties."

This has the ring of the "large utterance of the early gods," and in its sanity, its balance, its nice mental equipoise, is beyond the reach of the Voltaires and Volneys of the world. This rationalistic Raja has verily been the founder and father of the nineteenth century conception of the Scriptures which discards supernaturalism and miracle monging, and yet retains and reassures for the race those precious treasures, those storehouses of moral and spiritual force, and of living Authority. The Raja's method of interpretation was at once a marvellous 'Novum Organum' applied to the scriptures of the world, and a sure instinct anticipating the historic and evolutionary method of modern sociology. The essential and vital principles held in solution in the Hindu and Christian cultures and Civilizations precipitated themselves. The spirit of reason and universalism was breathed into those ancient bodies for giving them an immortality of youth and fresh national vigour.

## INTRODUCTION.

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SEVERAL of my friends having expressed a wish to be possessed of copies of my Translation of the Veds, and Controversies with those Brahmuns who are advocates for idolatry, I have collected for republication such of those tracts as I could find, either among my own papers or those of my friends who happened to have brought them from India, and now offer them to the public in their original form.

I feel induced to set forth here, briefly, the substance of these writings, to facilitate the comprehension of their purport, as being foreign to the generality of European readers. The Veds (or properly speaking, the spiritual parts of them) uniformly declare, that man is prone by nature, or by habit, to reduce the object or objects of his veneration and worship (though admitted to be unknown) to tangible forms, ascribing to such objects attributes, supposed excellent according to his own notions; whence idolatry, gross or refined, takes its origin, and perverts the true course of intellect to vain fancies. These authorities, therefore, hold out precautions against framing a deity after human imagination, and recommend mankind to direct all researches towards the surrounding objects, viewed either collectively or individually, bearing in mind their regular, wise, and wonderful combinations and arrangements; since such researches cannot fail, they affirm, to lead an unbiassed mind to a notion of a Supreme Existence,

who so sublimely designs and disposes of them, as is every where traced through the universe. The same Veds represent rites and external worship addressed to the planets and elementary objects, or personified abstract notions, as well as to deified heroes, as intended for persons of mean capacity; but enjoin spiritual devotion, as already described, benevolence, and self-control, as the only means of securing bliss.

RAMMOHUN ROY.

*London, July 23, 1832.*

P.S.—In all the following Translations, except the Cēna Upanishad, the mode of spelling Sanscrit words in English, adopted by Dr. J. B. Gilchrist, has been observed.

TRANSLATION  
OF AN  
ABRIDGMENT  
OF  
**THE VEDANT,**  
OR  
THE RESOLUTION OF ALL THE VEDS;  
THE  
MOST CELEBRATED AND REVERED WORK OF  
**Brahminical Theology;**  
ESTABLISHING THE UNITY OF THE SUPREME BEING; AND THAT  
HE ALONE  
IS THE OBJECT OF PROPITIATION AND WORSHIP.

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CALCUTTA:

1816.