

Raja Rammohun Roy, the Father of Modern India

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Raja Rammohun Roy is seen as the father of modern India who initiated a revolution in thought and sensibility that profoundly altered the way Indians thought and acted. He sowed the seeds of an enlightened European learning, purified the antediluvian practices of the Bengali Hindus and created a culture that included the best elements of the three dominant religions in India in the nineteenth century—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Though he admired the best of every religion he fell short of becoming a believer of any. Instead he evolved his own Brahma Samaj movement that was based on the Advaita vedantic philosophy advocating critical inquiry in thought and action and religious piety in the worship of the eternal and immutable being. His enigmatic personality has been the subject of many works and his reformist ability has been rated highly by Indian intellectuals and political leaders alike. A polyglot, his knowledge of Persian, Sanskrit and English was profound. His English prose style gave a new intellectual flavor to Indian writing in English and laid the foundation of a syncretistic sensibility and a secular tradition. Attracted to monotheistic religions he came into conflict with the Hindu beliefs of his parents creating acrimony in the family and discord in the Hindu community. This led to legal court battles where his mother tried to dispossess him of his ancestral property on charges of apostasy. He further antagonized the upper caste Hindus by chastising them for their irreligious practices, not supported by the Puranas or the Hindus shastras. Labeled as a traitor and an infidel attempts were made on his life. In the midst of a virulent campaign to malign him he decided to go to Europe. His visit to Europe made him into an instant celebrity as a representative of the modern mind, but his life was cut short by sickness and he died in Bristol in 1833. The Brahma Samaj movement that he initiated may have languished but the modernizing aspects in Hindu thought and tradition has undoubtedly been his legacy.

Raja Rammohun Roy was able to imbibe the finest elements of European modernity, purify quaint Hindu practices and synthesize the universal ideas of major civilizations, leading India into the modern world. His Muslim attire, European ideas, and unabated zeal to reform Indian society, made him the first Indian liberal humanist who discovered the essential unity and egalitarianism of all civilizations. The English philosopher and reformer, Jeremy Bentham, called him an “INTENSELY ADMIRABLE AND DEARLY BELOVED COLLABORATOR IN THE SERVICE OF MANKIND!” He was seen by many as the Erasmus of India. Rabindranath Tagore saw his scholarly and reformist legacy as the finest moment in Bengali culture. Some



Sketch of Raja Rammohun Roy from a portrait in the *Precepts of Jesus*, London 1834 lent by Sridevaprasad Mitra and reprinted in Collet's *Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta 1900

contemporary scholars like Sudipta Kaviraj see him as setting a standard for modern bhadralok culture in Bengal.

Rammohun has also been referred to as the father of modern India, the man who brought India out of the dark ages and introduced enlightened and egalitarian ideas from the west. But after 175 years of his passing it is somewhat difficult to say that the reforms he initiated still have a marked influence on the society of our times. Even in the late nineteenth century people began to question the significance and sweep of the Brahma Samaj movement and the religious reforms that he initiated.ⁱⁱ

Rammohun's inscrutable reputation created a predicament amongst political and religious leaders to evaluate him accurately. Mahatma Gandhi did not estimate Rammohun Roy's reformist ability high. Gandhi considered Rammohun Roy as an "unmitigated evil" and felt that when compared to Chaitanya, Sankar, Kabir or Nanak, both Rammohun Roy and Tilak "were so many pygmies, who had no hold on the people."ⁱⁱⁱ Gandhi however did not fail to appreciate the work done by Rammohun Roy confessing that he "highly revere [d]" him.^{iv} Though Gandhi was no historian, this ambivalence in Gandhi's thought also highlights the enigmatic personality and work of Raja Rammohun Roy. Tagore castigated Gandhi on his insensitivity to the greatness of Rammohun Roy and attempted to restore the latter's reputation by saying that, "Rammohun belongs to the lineage of India great seers who age after age have appeared in the arena of our history with the message of the Eternal Man."^v Swami Vivekananda pointed to Sister Nivedita that there were three principal instructions in Raja Rammohun Roy's teaching, "mapped out" with "breath and foresight," that were worth emulating. These three ideas were, his "acceptance of the Vedanta, his preaching of patriotism and the love that embraced the Mussulman equally with the Hindus."^{vi} Such is the whirligig of taste and assessment that it is

5. Cumberland Terrace
Regent's Park July 13th 1831

My dear and worthy Sir

I delayed answering your kind communication untill to-day in the expectation of hearing further from Dr. Browning. By a note just received from him I find that there will be no excursion on Saturday or Sunday next. Dr. B. will have communicated all the particulars to you. I am sorry to observe that you were under an impression that I probably felt a reluctance to meet you. I hope you will excuse me when I say that in entertaining such a thought you did injustice to my feelings. Perhaps your happiness was uninterrupted heath. I remain
My dear Sir

Yours most faithfully
Rammohun Roy

James Granton Esq.

Raja Rammohun Roy's letter to Jeremy Bentham,
London, 13 July 1831, British Museum, London and
printed in Collet's *Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta 1900

important to reassess his contribution to Indian society per se.

Dissatisfied with the conflicting rituals and dogma of his Hindu parents early in life, Raja Rammohun Roy began to appreciate the best traditions of Islamic and Christian culture and develop his own syncretistic thought. However he brought to all these traditions a critical inquiry and a scientific temper that prevented him from embracing any one religion altogether. He acknowledged the superiority of the British code of law that guaranteed civil liberties and commerce but was dissatisfied with British colonial rule. He appreciated the English scientific education and ethical teachings of Jesus but rejected the concept of Trinity. He adopted Islamic habits, civility and Muslim courtly dress style but disliked religious orthodoxy. His contemporaries saw him as an "anomaly," someone who did not fit into any specific cultural or religious category.^{vii}

Tagore saw Rammohun both as a heroic figure and a great philosopher. Tagore felt that Rammohun completely understood the modern age and introduced the comprehensive vision of civilizations, and yet was able to retain the singular uniqueness of all religions and cultures. Tagore wrote,

Rammohun was the only person in his time, in the whole world of man, to realize completely the significance of the Modern Age. He knew that the ideal of human civilization does not lie in the isolation of independence, but in the brotherhood of interdependence of individuals as well as of nations in all spheres of thought and activity.... His attempt was to establish our peoples on the full consciousness of their own cultural personality, to make them comprehend the reality of all that was unique and indestructible in their civilization, and simultaneously, to make them approach other civilizations in the spirit of sympathetic co-operation... Unsparingly he devoted himself to the task of rescuing from the debris of India's decadence the true products of its civilization and to make our people build on them, as the basis, the superstructure of an international culture. Deeply versed in Sanskrit, he revived classical studies, and while he imbued the Bengali literature and language with the rich atmosphere of our classical period, he opened its doors wide to the Spirit of the Age, offering access to new words from other languages, and to new ideas. To every sphere of our national existence he brought the sagacity of a comprehensive vision, the spirit of self-manifestation of the unique in the light of the universal.^{viii}

Tagore not only acknowledged the cosmopolitan character of Rammohun's vision but also the literary and intellectual merit of his writing—Rammohun offered “access to new words from other languages, and to new ideas” ushering in the “Spirit of the Age.”

The Brahmo Samaj Movement

A truly modern mind, Rammohun acknowledged the most practical and useful aspects of every religion and criticized their impractical and savage practices. His critical attitude towards every religion alienated their orthodox adherents, but he was not unduly perturbed. A modern free thinker, he leaned more towards the egalitarian and Universalist ideas in Hinduism than towards its antiquated ritualistic practices. He developed his own religious thought after a disagreement with the British Unitarians and embodied his ideas in a new society called the Brahmo Samaj. The Samaj was founded in August 1828 in Calcutta.^{ix} The Brahmo Samaj followed the Advaita Vedantic tradition advocating a spirit of critical inquiry and religious piety followed by a “worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe.”^x Not only did former members of Atmiya Sabha participated in the activities of the Samaj but also those who shared some of his radical views on issues related to education, government, women, sati, commerce and purification of Hindu practices.^{xi} With the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj movement Rammohun's “final split with Unitarians in Bengal” was complete.^{xii}

Sudipta Kaviraj points out that the Brahmo Samaj as a movement might have waned in modern times, but it nonetheless played “a foundational role” in creating a truly modern Bengali culture by establishing “rules” of bhadrakok etiquette, “refashioning” the literary language and

creating a “revolution” in women’s dress.^{xiii} Though the progressive Brahmos are eulogized today, they were not without fault. The Brahmos disliked Hindu caste tradition and its sanction by the *Manusmṛti*, but they also replaced the canonical text with another canonical text, the *Upanishads*. They instituted the practice of congregational songs in praise of Brahma called *brahmasangit* and initiated revised version of Vedic hymns even when they had earlier complained of Brahmin priest destroying classical Sanskrit and singing oafish songs in temples. Though the liberal Brahmos did not dislike the Muslims any more than other orthodox Hindus they did attempt to create “a high Bengali culture and literature [that] looked entirely toward the repertoire of classical Hinduism for its resources.”^{xiv}

Primary and Secondary Sources

Though Rammohun Roy made major and categorical pronouncements about Hindu rituals, Vedanta philosophy, monotheism and idolatry he hardly said much about his own personal life. There are two occasions when he broke this silence and commented about his scholarly research and religious disagreement with his parents. The first instance can be found in the *Kabitakarersahit-bicar* (1820) where he refers to the availability of the main Upanisads and commentaries on it in the home library of Bengali scholar Mrtyunjay Vidyalankar, library of the College of Fort William, and home libraries of other Bengali pundits.^{xv} The other autobiographical reference can be found in a letter written in English in 1833 confessing his religious disagreement with his father. There are other letters written to friends and important British dignitaries but they do not provide any insight into his personal life directly.

There are three important studies, bringing together legal documentary evidence shedding more light on his life and career than any other study on him except Collet’s biography. The first study was produced by Chanda, Ramaprasad and Majumdar entitled, *Letters and Documents Relating to The Life of Raja Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta, 1938) and is an interesting collection of court documents submitted by his family members during court proceedings of a family litigation. This study provides reliable information of Rammohun Roy’s early life. The second research work is by J. K. Majumdar under the title *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movement in India: From Official Records 1803–1845* (Calcutta, 1941). It reveals the last thirty years of his life and the uncertain future he faced at home and in society. A third volume by the same author entitled *Rajah Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls: A Selection from Official Records 1803–1859* (Calcutta, 1939) brings together Rammohun Roy’s communication with Akbar II and places him squarely within the late Mughal ethos.

The three volumes together with his own writings provide an excellent account of Rammohun Roy’s life. Interestingly most of the work on Rammohun Roy was done in English and not in Bengali, a telltale reminder of his modernity and popularity in Europe. Many English journals provide an excellent account of his thoughts, attitudes and ideas upon various subjects ranging from the position of women to monotheism and idolatry, journals such as *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society*, *The Missionary Register*, *Evangelical Magazine and the Christian Reformer*.^{xvi} The Christian missionaries were keenly interested in Rammohun Roy’s attack on Hindu idolatry and antiquated practices, dutifully documenting these in their journals, in order to justify their reformist and enlightened position. A few like William Ward were convinced of Rammohun Roy’s Christian leanings and anticipated his conversion.



Sketch of Sophia Dobson Collet printed in Collet's *Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1900

When Rammohun Roy died on 27th September 1833 many of his European friends and admirers wrote either eulogies or standard memoirs. Most controversial amongst these were Stanford Arnot's essay which was published in the *Athenaeum* 5th October 1833 together with Rammohun letter. Arnot's memoir was both criticized and rejected for selfish and mala fide intention. Other works such as by James C.C. Sutherland, Robert Montgomery Martin, Robert Aspland, Lant Carpenter, William Adam, Rakhaldas Haldar and Mary Carpenter added new facets if not just snippets to his life. In 1972, the centenary year of Rammohun Roy's birth, scholars published a few eulogies but they were trite and miserably inadequate to do justice to the greatness of his life.

Miss Sophia Dobson Collet's authoritative biography of Rammohun Roy entitled, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy* was published posthumously in 1900 by Harold Collet, London. It is one of the best works on Rammohun Roy and immediately caught the attention of the European and Indian public upon publication. In 1913 the late Hemchandra Sarkar of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj brought out a second edition of the book. In recent years the edition has become quite difficult to find. A third edition of the same book was brought out in 1962 by Sadharan Brahma Samaj and was edited by Dilip Kumar Biswas of the Presidency College Calcutta and Prabhat Chandra Ganguli, author of *Rammohan-Presange*.^{xvii}

Miss Collet was an invalid but felt it was her life's mission to write a biography of Rammohun Roy. She accordingly collected voluminous material and wrote sections of the biography from her sick bed. As her illness advanced she requested her friend Rev. F. Herbert Stead to collate her research. In the "Continuation Note" to the biography Collet says,

I am dying. I cannot finish my 'Life of Rammohun Roy'. But when I enter the Unseen, I want to be able to tell Rammohun that his 'Life' will be finished. Will you finish it for me?^{xviii}

Though Stead was not at all interested in such a task the request came to him as a “mandate which he could not disobey.”^{xxix} As Collet’s health failed completely Stead began to write the continuation text without her help. However Stead kept her style and sensibility in subsequent pages giving the book her indubitable signature. Stead remarked,

But the work in conception, outline materials, and in all but concluding literary execution, is and remains Miss Collet’s.^{xx}

Collet died on 27th March 1894 leaving behind an unfinished work for Stead. Stead’s finally managed to publish the book in 1900.

Collet’s book possesses both authenticity and scientific detachment. She was not only able to collect facts but also to verify them thoroughly. The ‘literary excellence’ and ‘usefulness’ of the book is beyond measure.^{xxi} Perhaps the only drawback in Collet’s work is that it emphasizes the Christian elements in Rammohun’s thought. This was bound to happen, as both Collet and Stead were devout Christians—Collet was a Trinitarian and Stead a Congregational minister from Leicester. Both were unable to read or understand Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian, languages in which Rammohun wrote exhaustively.

Life

Born in 1772, Rammohun was a Narottam thakur from his father’s side and a Vaidika Vaishnava from his mother’s side. Early in life he saw the differences in rituals performed by his parents. Critical of the rituals of both he attempted to escape their stranglehold by becoming a sanyasi or a mendicant. A letter by him reveals the theological difference with his father, though the authenticity of the letter may be questioned. Collet cites the letter in her book though the original manuscript has never been found. The letter is cited here completely as it is difficult to find the copy *in toto*. The letter reads as follows,

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 aggrandizement. 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 them-

selves to the courts of the Mohammedan princes, and agreeably to the usage of my maternal relations, I devoted myself to the study of the Sanscrit and the theological works written in it, which contain the body of Hindoo 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 the 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 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 on 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 the resistance to my opinions, several highly respectable persons both among my own relations 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 institutions. I refrained, however, from carrying the intention into effect until the friends who coincided in my sentiments should be increased in number and strength. My expectations having been at length realized, 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 India 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^{xxii}

Written in a liberal enlightened style, the letter underscores Rammohun's pride in his high Brahmin lineage and the allurements of worldly desire. Though Rammohun talks about his pure, one-and-a-half-century old fraternal lineage, he also castigates his progenitors for having given up "spiritual exercises" for "worldly pursuits and aggrandizement." Rammohun however praises his maternal ancestors for following their ancient religious tradition choosing "peace and tranquillity of mind" over the "excitements of ambition" and the "allurements of worldly grandeur." In the letter he criticizes the British rule in India, looking at it with a "feeling of great aversion." Rammohun admits in the letter that he studied Persian and Arabic languages because it was the express "wish" of his father and also because these were "indispensable" languages for working in Mughal courts. However his study of foreign languages did not prevent him from developing his skills in the Sanskrit language, as it was the most important language of Hindu "literature, law and religion."

Rammohun confesses that his dislike for the Hindu belief in idolatry began early in life, and when he was sixteen he scathingly attacked the aforementioned tradition. This brought him in ideological confrontation with his father that resulted in "a coolness" of feeling between them. Rammohun then left his home to travel extensively both in India and abroad. When Rammohun was twenty years old his father might have had a change of heart and "restored" him to his "favour." Rammohun's own dislike for Europeans changed as he began to appreciate their enlightened laws, moderate views and "form of Government." Rammohun continued to find fault with the idolatrous, superstitious and abominable practices of the Hindus, especially the "burning of widows." This increased the "animosity" of the Hindus against him and prompted his father once again to withdraw his "countenance openly," though he continued to support him financially.

After his father's death Rammohun mounted a full-blooded attack on the idolatrous practices of the Hindus both in Bengali and English.^{xxiii} The approach he took was not to condemn Brahminism but to show how Brahmins have deviated from the "practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities." Though many opposed his counter narrative some were soon converted to his ideas.

Now in full command of the enlightened European tradition and language, Rammohun wanted to get a first-hand knowledge of European "manners, customs, religion, and political institutions." A letter tells us that in 1830 he traveled to England as an emissary of the Mughal Emperor Akbar II to present before the Privy Council the request for an increase in pecuniary grants curtailed by the East India Company and campaign for some of his own reformative ideas, such as the abolition of sati.

In his early twenties Rammohun returned to Langalpara to take care of his father's ancestral property and began to appreciate the work done by foreigners in India. However being a precocious child with a sharp intellect he soon came in conflict with his mother who attempted to disinherit him for being an apostate.

Rammohun Roy was a part of early Hindu society that practiced polygamy. He was mar-

ried three times before he was nine and had two children from his second marriage. His attitude towards women was largely shaped by his early experiences and especially by the subordinate position of his domineering mother in the Brahmin household. His concern for the subordinate role of women and their exploitation in society would lead him to campaign for women's rights and the abolition of sati.

Rammohun Roy soon developed an autodidactic method to investigate knowledge and culture that gave his prose a sharp critical edge in both argument and style. He investigated the three major civilizations of his time—Hindu, Christian and Islamic—in a scientific manner. He neither completely accepted nor rejected the system, belief or custom enshrined in each religion but “distinguished the useful from the harmful, the more true from the less true.”^{xxiv} Furthermore he did not see “a fundamental opposition” between Indian and European civilizations as Tagore and Gandhi did but found a rational justification to adapt them for common use and for the common good.^{xxv}

Visit to England

Rammohun Roy always wanted to visit England and was quite eager to see the land of the enlightened thinkers like Locke, Bacon and Newton. One of his contemporaries Kisoricand Mitra tellingly explains Rammohun's burning desire to visit Britain thus:

He longed to see the country to whose keeping the destinies of his own had been entrusted—the country, where philosophy, liberty and science had achieved their proudest triumphs—the country of the Lockes, of the Bacons, of the Newtons, of the Hampdons, and of the Watts. By his visit to England he proposed to attain two objects—first, to obtain, as he says in one of his letters, ‘by personal observation more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion, and political institutions’: and secondly, to seek for help in his efforts to regenerate his fatherland.^{xxvi}

He also wanted to study at either Oxford or Cambridge the ultimate seats of scholarship and learning in Europe. But his failing health did not allow him to realize his wish. He died of brain fever on 27th September 1833 in Bristol.

While he was in England people were impressed by his “inbred urbanity,” “good breeding,” “sound understanding and knowledge of the human mind,” and “perspicacious, correct and idiomatic” English.^{xxvii} Ralph Waldo Emerson saw him as a prized “trophy” for the “zealous Trinitarians.” And many transcendentalists admired his eastern sensibility.^{xxviii}

His death was lamented and his contributions highlighted in Europe. However in Bengal reactions to his death were somewhat mixed. Some felt he accelerated “independent thinking” and a “more elevated moral tone” amongst the people of the Hindu community. His writing and personal demeanor were seen as examples guiding the thoughts and actions of Bengali men in years to come. The Governor General Sir William Bentinck contributed 500 rupees at his commemoration promising to add more if a professorship was endowed after his name.^{xxix} However this never happened.

Decadence of Bengali Hindu Society

Convinced of the deterioration and decadence of Bengali Hindu society of the nineteenth century, Raja Rammohun Roy spearheaded a movement to modernize Indian society through western scientific knowledge and critical thinking.^{xxx} Indeed, towards the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Indian society was in a state of utter decay and disrepair. Not only practices like slavery, sati and prostitution prevailed but other social evils like Rajput female infanticide, human sacrifices in the hilly regions of Ganjam and Vizagapatnam, drowning of unwanted children in Ganga Sagar, *thuggee* and *dakaiti* or armed robbery were quite common. The growth of a class of rich and idle men in Calcutta called *babus* or *gentoos* who gave themselves pretentious titles like *raja*, *maharaja* or *dewan* and attempted to imitate the lifestyle of the nabobs, also became fashionable. The upper class Muslims lamented the lost glory of the Mughals and kept themselves aloof from upper caste Hindus and English.^{xxxi} The dark shadows of residual ancient and medieval worlds continued to haunt the Indian society in the first half of the nineteenth century.

As commercial Calcutta became the seat of British government, administrative strictures controlling its trade became imperative here than in the cities of Bombay or Madras. Rammohun Roy a champion of Unitarian principles was quite exasperated by the Hindus, Brahmins and Christians missionaries who continued to delude their followers by stressing the importance of “mystery and mystical” aspects in religion.^{xxxii} Tagore lamented how “static ritualism, meaningless ceremonies and habitual repetitions of illogical behaviour,” practiced in the name of “morality,” had “fragmented” human relations leaving “narrow and limited” spheres of social interaction.^{xxxiii} Rammohun felt that reform in all walks of life, especially religion and social customs, were the need of the hour.

Monotheistic Philosophy

The things that urgently needed change were idolatry, the heinous practice of sati and religious dogma in Islam and Hinduism. Rammohun Roy’s dislike of Hindu idolatry was to do with his early education in monotheistic Islam and Vedantic conception of Brahma. In 1803 he joined the East India Company at Murshidabad and two years later wrote *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* or A Gift to Monotheists (1803–04) in Persian. It was a rationalist tract protesting religious dogmatism in Bengali society and espousing the unity of God. However his strict attempt to define the essence of Islam and purify it of dogma antagonized some Muslims. As his ideas developed, he combined rationalism with utilitarianism to develop a Brahmo monotheistic philosophy to fight social injustice, press censorship and intellectual stupor.^{xxxiv} He advocated a secular and scientific education policy and followed the tradition of Akbar, Sufi saints and Ramkrishna Paramhans. In 1804 he became a *munshi* to the Registrar of Murshidabad, Thomas Woodforde and began learning English. By next year, when he began to work for John Digby, he had already become proficient in English. When Digby retired in 1814 Rammohun Roy returned to England, and thence back to Calcutta. Here he established the Atmiya Sabha to study the Vedas and discuss various social problems of which *sati* were the first issue taken up.

In spite of the revolutionary ideas espoused by Rammohun Roy, he did not voice his support for outright freedom but accepted to work within the legal system and change Indian society from within. A political moderate, he also pleaded for judicial reforms especially the intro-

duction of trial by jury.^{xxxv} He felt that the freedom of speech expressed through a free press was in the long run beneficial to society.^{xxxvi}

Convinced of the evils of the Permanent Settlement initiated by Lord Cornwallis, Rammohun Roy campaigned against land tax and trade monopoly of the East Indian Company. In 1830 the Mughal emperor Akbar II conferred on Rammohun Roy the title of a “raja” and sent him to England to negotiate with the English government to direct the East India Company for a 3-lakh rupee increase in his annual pension.^{xxxvii} Rammohun not only succeeded in negotiating the increase but also got the Hindu appeal against the abolition of sati dismissed by the Privy Court. He also helped to end the commercial activities when the Reform Act of 1833 came for renewal. Rammohun Roy attitude towards the Mughals was rather ambivalent. He was quite critical of their leadership and rule but readily accepted any honors conferred by them.

Brahma Pauttalik Samvad

The best way perhaps to understand Rammohun Roy’s counter discourse on Hinduism is to read *The Dialogue Between a Theist and an Idolater* called *Brahma Pauttalik Samvad* in Bengali, a religious and argumentative tract written in 1820. The tract was signed under a pseudonym Brajmohan Debashiya and was called “A Tract Against the Prevailing System of Hindoo Idolatry” and priced at one rupee. The *Samvad* tract is an excellent treatise against idol worship and provides us a glimpse of Rammohun’s style of argument, method of investigation, intellectual virtuosity and his knowledge of Sanskrit sources. Probably Rammohun chose a pseudonym to write his criticism of abominable Hindu practices, as by this time he had already become “the bête noire of the orthodox Hindu community of Calcutta because of his opposition to their traditional beliefs and customs.”^{xxxviii} The *Samvad* tract not only highlights the controversy between the monotheists and polytheists of Bengal but also argues from a monotheistic perspective to purify polytheistic beliefs. Rammohun’s erudite use of the *Puranas* and the *Shastras* effectively destroys the idolatrous beliefs of the Bengali Hindus.

The *Samvad* tract takes the reader right into the monotheistic-polytheistic controversy of his times,

I would ask those Pundits, together with their followers, who are averse to the worship of the supreme God, and devoted to the service of images: Why do you make yourselves the laughing-stock of all sensible men, by considering miserable images which are devoid of sense, motion and the power of speech, as the omniscient, omnipresent and almighty God? And why do you expose yourselves to the scorn and contempt of all the world, by considering such absurd practices, as playing with the fingers on the mouth, beating one’s sides, snapping the fingers and stamping with the foot on the ground, further clapping with the hands and singing exceedingly obscene and abominable songs, and finally bending and moving the body in various disgusting ways, as spiritual worship?

If you say: the worship of images is enjoined in the Shasters; accordingly we follow only these injunctions by worshipping images. Thus it is written in the Shasters: ‘Those who consider the image of a god as mere stone, will go to hell.’ And again: ‘If an image is made properly, then the god will dwell in it;’

I reply: As the worship of images is authorized by the Poorans, thus the same Poorans and

similar books contain also passages, in which the worship of images is reprobated as f.i. 'All those ignorant persons who consider an image made of earth, metal, stone, wood, or any other similar substance as God, bring upon themselves only bodily trouble, but do not obtain salvation.'

Again: 'A person who out of ignorance forsakes me, the all-pervading Spirit, and worships images, does nothing but offer a sacrifice upon ashes.' Accordingly I see that the Shasters are at variance with each other. Now there are two ways of reconciling them, one of which is this, that these discordant passages are understood as referring to persons of different descriptions, viz. the permission of worshipping images which is to be found therein, refers only to ignorant people; but those who are duly instructed, are forbidden to worship images; and consequently it is evident, that they are commanded to worship the supreme God only.^{xxxix}

He not only castigates "matted hair" mendicants who befool people but also admonishes such "stupid persons" who see these "deceivers" as "saints." Though such deceiving saints are reputed for their knowledge of "the past and future" they are ignorant of "what is going on in their own houses, and in their nearest neighborhood."^{xl} Rammohun then concludes his argument thus,

But if such imposters attempt to play their tricks with enlightened men, then the whole imposture is immediately discovered, and they meet with the treatment which they have deserved. Do you not see clearly that in Calcutta, and in all the neighbouring places, where there are more well instructed men than in any other places, such deceits are on that account not very commonly practiced? Thus in the neighbourhood of Calcutta very few persons are to be found, who pretend to deliver men from the effects of witchcraft, and to drive out evil spirits; but in the forest of Vishnoopoor, the eastern parts of Bengal, and in Assam, where ignorance prevails, all these imposters are held in great reputation, and in all houses wonderful stories of spirits and witches are told. The saintship of image worshipers may easily be put to test; viz. tell only one of these pretended Saints to shew his saintship in our presence; then the matter will be decided at once. You yourself say that Bramha, Vishnoo and Sheeva are not able to alter the order of nature; nevertheless you believe, that a certain Saint took away the life of a man, and did not allow the sun to rise. God has given you a human nature; therefore think and act also like men. It is indeed melancholy to see persons believe, that men can act contrary to the laws established by God.^{xli}

In Section 3 of the *Samvad* tract Rammohun chastises those who want to do things the way their forefathers did without giving a thought to reason:

That is very strange, that you drag forward the name of your forefathers, in order to defend your playing with images, whereas in all other matters, whether secular, or spiritual, you pay very little regard to their manner of life. We know, there are thousands among you, whose forefathers were devoted to the practice of meritorious works, and to the study of the

sacred sciences; whereas they themselves, in perfect opposition to the habits of their forefathers, give themselves altogether up to worldly pursuits, and are serving foreigners; and if any makes his fortune among them, he is spoken of as the chief of the family. When did the forefathers of any, in the Doorgapooja and other festivals, ever employ Mahomedan dancing girls, and invite foreigners into their houses and entertain them? which now-a-days many do, who are held in great reputation. Some employ dancing girls in the celebration of the festivals Jhoolna-jatra and Nandatshab. Whose forefathers ever did so?^{xliii}

Revealing the contradiction in traditional thinking Rammohun debunks illogical arguments such as ancestral tradition as mere self-seeking interest meant to hoodwink others.

Later in the tract Rammohun embarks on debunking more abominable practices such as bathing old parents in cold Ganga waters in December and burning widows thus,

Further, in order to obtain the benefits which is thought to be derived from the Ganges, you dip your old sick parents at midnight in the month of December into the water, and thus kill them; because in that season it is so exceedingly cold and there is such a rough wind, that even in case you should then keep a vigorous young man in the water for two hours, it would be no wonder if he died of it. Moreover, you burn your sisters, whether young or old, and your mothers, grandmothers, daughters, daughter-in-laws, &c. enticing them to consent to it by holding out to them the prospect of entering thereby into heaven, and tying them to the pile with ropes and bamboos. Now it is surely the duty of a benevolent man, if he thus sees others kill their fathers, mothers, wives, &c. to make a stand against such an abomination.^{xliiii}

Finally the *Samvad* concludes by exhorting men to shed illusion, eschew idolatry, give up “irreligious actions,” believe in “God as the all-pervading Spirit,” promote the “welfare” of self and others and” get “salvation.” The Christian vocabulary within a Hindu context could have been both bold and surprising in nineteenth century Bengal. It is interesting to follow Rammohun’s concluding arguments in the *Samvad*,

Another reason why there exists such a disunion of heart between us, is this, that what you consider as duties of religion, and the acts of worship which you perform, we consider actually as irreligious actions. The particular thereof are these: the blocks of earth and stone, the trees, fowls, beasts, birds and other things which you consider as God, we do not consider as such; the bending of the hands, and feet and other limbs, the dancing and playing, and the weaving of wood round about your neck, and the marks of sandal-wood &c. which you consider as productive of religious merit, we do not consider as such. You say that drinking the water of particular places, and covering the body with the dust and mud which is found there, is a religious action, which we deny. Some among you eat in some particular places food in impure places and with impure hands, considering it under such circumstances as entirely pure and productive of religious merit, which we do not allow. Further, some sects among you consider the eating and drinking of intoxicating articles of all sorts, the killing of living creatures and bloody festivals as spiritual worship, which we

do not. Some sects among you declare the eating of that which proceeds from the body of a cow as an action productive of religious merit, which we do not consider as a religious action. To burn women to death and to murder old parents by drowning them in water, and dragging them upon stones and bricks, you consider as religious actions, which we do not. The clapping together of shells, the ringing of bells, the dancing, the snapping of the fingers, and such like practices, which you consider as religious acts, we do not regard so. To fast at particular seasons and to make others fast, you consider as a religious duty, which we do not. You declare all kinds of promiscuous sensual intercourse in the worship of particular deities to be religious acts, which we deny. Accordingly, we exhort you once more: ‘Believe in God as the all-preserving Spirit, who knows the deeds, words, and thoughts of all men: and by walking according to his commandments promote your own welfare and that of others, and obtain salvation.’ If you do not improve the instructions we have now given you, but hate and revile us, we shall regard this as a matter of very little consequence, for we cannot suffer much loss, nor receive much profit from that which such miserable ignorant persons say concerning us, whose gods are earth, stone, wood and metal, and whose objects of worship are monkeys, bears, kites, jackals and such like creatures. Accordingly you are for us objects of pity, but not of hatred.-We say again: ‘Forsake the playing with images, and believe in the supreme God.’^{xiv}

Towards the end of the tract Rammohun condemns, “all kinds of promiscuous sensual intercourse in the worship of particular deities” more as a Kantian categorical imperative and less as pantheistic dharma. Obviously Rammohun’s Christian European friends found his arguments closer to their own thinking than his Hindu contemporaries.

Indian English Literature and the Liberal English Tradition

The *Samvad* weakened the stranglehold of idolatry and prepared the ground for the introduction of western investigative methods in the areas of metaphysics, morality and religious verification.

On July 14th 1832 Rammohun Roy’s last work entitled *Remarks on Settlement in India by Europeans* was published. It made four suggestions for the future of India:

1. The language of India should be English
2. A liberal religion should prevail
3. The social conditions in India should be similar to the west and
4. India should become a teacher to Asia.^{xiv}

He further suggested that Indian intellectuals should be inducted in the government based on their ability and skill.

The *Remarks on Settlement* is a remarkable document of “personal and national importance” in which he also demands the removal of restrictions placed by the Old Charter on “the lease and purchase of lands by Europeans.” He also suggested the dissemination of education to improve both Indian society and its relationship with Britain. Here is Rammohun’s argument of the two important advantages that removing restrictions would bring,

The same cause would operate to continue the connection between Great Britain and India on a solid and permanent footing, provided only that the latter country be governed in a liberal manner, by means of Parliamentary superintendence and such other legislative checks in this country as may be devised and established. India may thus for an unlimited period enjoy union with England, and the advantage of her enlightened Government; and in return contribute to support the greatness of this country.

If, however, events should occur to effect a separation between the two countries, then still the existence of a large body of respectable settlers (consisting of Europeans and their descendants, professing Christianity, and speaking the English language in common with the bulk of the people, as well as possessed of superior knowledge, scientific, mechanical and political) would bring that vast Empire in the East to a level with other large Christian countries in Europe, and by means of its immense riches and extensive population, and by the help which may be reasonably expected from Europe, they (the settlers and their descendants) may succeed sooner or later in enlightening the surrounding nations of Asia.^{xvi}

It must be noted that even at such an early stage of colonial rule Rammohun Roy did not foreclose the option of India's independence from British domination. Though he sympathized with the enlightened governance of the British he always felt that a free nation was the ideal form of political system for people.

Though Rammohun Roy was less of a literary figure and more of a social reformer, he nonetheless contributed to the development of Indian-English literature through his socio-political ideas and his synthetic approach to various traditions, which prompted Tagore to call him a "great Unifier".^{xvii} Rammohan Roy was not alone in this endeavor. There were Muslim reformers as well, such as Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817–98) who also valued western scientific knowledge and wanted to revive Indian Islamic identity.^{xviii} Rammohun was unique in the sense that he did not only "contest" British and Christian "representations of India" but "complicated the Indian counterdiscourse" to attack conservative Hindu understanding of their religion.^{xix} He used the "reformist mode" to enlighten his readers not only in English but also in other languages.ⁱ

With the establishment of new universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and schools and colleges, English literacy spread rapidly through the country, creating erudite Indians such as Henry Vivian Derozio (1809–1831), Kashi Prosad Ghose (1809–1873), Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848–1909), Manmohan Ghosh (1869–1924), Toru Dutt (1856–77) and others who contributed immensely to an enlightened discourse about various aspects of the Indian reality and also modernized their own vernaculars. Suniti Chatterjee therefore concludes that English language was instrumental in modernizing the "mind of India," and had far-reaching consequences that people at that time could anticipate.ⁱⁱ Rammohun Roy was foremost amongst them all.

Traitor and Infidel—Attempts on His Life

Resentment towards Rammohun was growing in the conservative Hindu society of Bengal. There were "threats and plots of mortal violence." However the last straw was the abolition of sati by the British in India in 1829. Collet writes that,

It was the abolition of sati which let loose the floods of reactionary fury. Avarice and bigotry, two of the strongest passions of human nature, had been hard hit; and they demanded a victim. Rammohun was marked out as the guilty party. He was the traitor within the gates, who had sold the keys to the infidel oppressor, therefore he must die.ⁱⁱⁱ

His friends were convinced that his life was “seriously threatened by a gang of assassins.” When he went out into town Rammohun carried a dagger and a swordstick; his friend Martin carried swordsticks and pistols. Two attempts were made on his life and Hindu spies “made holes in his walls to watch him in his privacy” to find some personal act that “would render him an out-caste.”ⁱⁱⁱ The Dharma Sabha was instrumental in organizing these attacks. The mud slinging continued. Some even suggested that he was of Muslim descent.^{iv} But in the midst of “virulent calumny” and “mortal menace” Rammohun’s reformist zeal did not dampen. He continued to publish his books, write against Sati, work for the Brahma Samaj and campaigned for an enlightened Christian education.^{iv}

Rammohun Roy pioneered India into the modern world and opened its intellectual horizons to the very best Europe had to offer. The impact of his ideas was increasingly felt not only in the social and political life of Bengal but in the life of the Indian subcontinent as well. The high modern culture that Rammohun Roy helped to forge in Bengal was gradually appropriated by the rest of Hindu India and became quintessentially Indian in nature.^{vi} The rise of liberal education, the proliferation of the English language, the growth of democratic institutions and enlightened laws can be traced to the new modern temper that Rammohun Roy fashioned in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Notes and References

ⁱ Collet, “Correspondence Between Rammohun Roy and Jeremy Bentham,” *Life*, *ibid*, p. 488.

ⁱⁱ Ram Chandra Bose, *Brahmoism: Or History of Reformed Hinduism*, (New York, 1884). Ram Chandra Bose felt that towards the latter half of the nineteenth century the Brahma Samaj movement had already become defunct. He wrote, “The reform inaugurated by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy has nearly perished. The system of philosophy he revived ... has so far deviated from its original principles that it may properly be said to have ceased to exist.” p. 193.

ⁱⁱⁱ J. N.C. Ganguli, *Ram Mohan Roy*, p. 207 in Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XIX, pp 476–7.

^{iv} Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works*, XX, pp. 42–5. Krishna Kriplani highlights the ambivalence in Gandhi’s assessment of Rammohun Roy in an essay entitled “Rammohan Roy and Mahatma Gandhi,” in *Raja Rammohun Roy and the New Learning*, ed. B. P. Barua, (Calcutta, 1988), pp. 4–23.

^v Rabindranath Tagore, *Bharat Pathik Rammohana Raya*, (Visvabharti: 1366 B.S.), pp. 68–138.

^{vi} *Notes of Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda*, Third Edition; (Calcutta: Udbodhan Office, 1948), p. 16.

^{vii} Bruce Carlisle Robertson, *Raja Rammohan Ray: The Father of Modern India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995). Robertson writes, “In his Mughal manners and dress, in his newly-acquired English language skills and European tastes, he was the image of the prosperous nineteenth century Calcutta babu. Yet in private he hankered for distinction as a shastric scholar. Ridiculed by the Hindu pandit establishment for imitating the outward appearance of the ashraf

- (Mughal aristocrat), which was fashionable among the bhadralok, Ramhoman sought scholarly recognition,” p. 24.
- ^{viii} Rabindranath Tagore, “Inaugurator of The Modern Age in India,” in the *Father of Modern India*, Commemoration Volume of the Rammohun Roy Centenary Celebrations, 1933, (Calcutta: Rammohun Roy Centenary Committee, 1935), Part 2, pp. 4–5.
- ^{ix} The first meeting of the Sabha was convened by Rammohun on August 20, 1828 at the house of Kamal Bose in Calcutta. The meeting was a congregation of Bengali Brahmins who recited Sanskrit shlokas from the Upanishads and hymns composed by Rammohun. On 8th January 1830 the progressives in the Kulin Brahmin sect wrote a trust choosing a place for the first Adi Brahma Samaj at Chitpore Road now called Rabindra Sarani.
- ^x S.D. Collet, *An Historical Sketch of the Brahma Samaj*, (Calcutta, 1873), p. 468
- ^{xi} Ramacandra Vidyavagis was the only minister of the Brahma Samaj who campaigned for pro-sati laws and even petitioned the king in this regard. See *Sahitya Sadhak Caritmalā*, Volumes VI, VII, IX, p. 67.
- ^{xii} Robertson, *Raja Rammohun Ray*, *ibid.* p. 45.
- ^{xiii} Sudipto Kaviraj, “Two Literary Culture Histories in Bengal,” in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 540.
- ^{xiv} Kaviraj, *ibid.* pp. 540–41. Kaviraj points out that the representation of Islamic rule as “foreign” domination could be found in many Brahma and conservative Hindu writings, p. 541.
- ^{xv} See *Ramamohanagranthabali*, eds., B. N. Bandyopadhyaya and S. K. Dasa, (Kalikata, n.d.), p. 68.
- ^{xvi} See *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society*, (Number 31, June 1815 to January 1816), *The Missionary Register* (1816), *Evangelical Magazine* (xxv, 1817, xxvi, 1818), and the *Christian Reformer* (ix, 1818).
- ^{xvii} A copy of the text can be found at Keio University, Mita Library in Japan to which all subsequent references are made in this paper.
- ^{xviii} Sophia Dobson Collet, “Continuation Note,” in *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, eds. Dilip Kumar Biswas and Prabhat Chandra Ganguli, (Calcutta: Sadharan Brahma Samaj, 1962), p. xi.
- ^{xix} Collet, *ibid.*
- ^{xx} Collet, *ibid.* p. vi.
- ^{xxi} Collet, *ibid.* Preface, p.vi.
- ^{xxii} Collet, *ibid.* , pp., 496–98.
- ^{xxiii} Vinay Dharwadker points out that, “The earliest Indian writers in English—Din Muhammad, C. V. Boriah, and Rammohun Roy—encountered and learned to speak English, acquired their English literacy, and adapted themselves to British and European culture in the course of their employment, using the resources they already possessed as literate Indian multilinguals.” See Vinay Dharwadker, “Formation of Indian-English Literature,” in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 21.
- ^{xxiv} See *Dialogue Between a Theist and an Idolater: An 1820 Tract Probably by Rammohun Roy*, ed. Stephen N Hay, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), p. 44.
- ^{xxv} Stephen Hay, *ibid.* p. 44.

- ^{xxvi} Kisoricand Mitra, "Rammohun Roy," *Calcutta Review*, 1867, Volume 44, Number 87, p. 219.
- ^{xxvii} See extract from an unpublished Letter from a Friend in Liverpool, dated 16 April 1831 in Manchester College, Oxford and quoted by Robertson, *Raja Rammohan Ray*, *ibid.* p. 47. Also see *The Times*, June 13, 1831 and 29 October 1832.
- ^{xxviii} Arthur Christy, *the Orient in American Transcendentalism*, (New York, 1963), p. 338.
- ^{xxix} See *The Asiatic Journal*, 1834, XV, p. 223.
- ^{xxx} The decadence of individual character and society was apparent to many. Shivnath Shastri saw three defects in the Indian character towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries: firstly, polygamy and the *pardah* system; secondly, male licentiousness; and thirdly, flattery, deception and treachery. See Shivnath Shastri, *Ramtonu Lahiri o Tatkalin Banga Samaj*, (Calcutta: 1904), pp. 37–38.
- ^{xxxi} Amongst the ordinary Muslims western modernization was either missing or rather slow. The reform or the Faraizi movement initiated by Haji Shariatullah in the first half of the nineteenth century especially amongst the poor Muslims oppressed by zamindars also modernized Islamic customs and initiated the independence of Bengal.
- ^{xxxii} Raja Rammohun Roy, Speech before the Unitarian Association, London.
- ^{xxxiii} Rabindranath Tagore, *Bharat Pathik Rammohan Roy, Rabindra Rachnabali*, Birth Centenary Edition, Vol 11), p. 383, trans. P.C. Bhattacharya in *Indo-Anglian Literature*, *ibid.* p. 33. Nagendra Nath Chattopadhaya noticed the "ignorance" and "idolatry" of the people in Bengal. Here not the superior knowledge of the Vedas or the Upanishads but the self-seeking and money-minded rituals of the "illiterate Bhattacharyas" prevailed. See Nagendra Nath Chattopadhaya, *Mahatma Raja Rammohan Rai-er Jiban Charita*, (Allahabad, 1928), pp. 36–37.
- ^{xxxiv} In 1828 Rammohun Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta to synthesize the ideas on god in Islamic, Christian and Vendata traditions. Though its membership was not large it brought a new awareness in the people, a new awakening in society and reforms in Hindu religious practice.
- ^{xxxv} When in 1827 trial by jury was introduced in the Court of Circuit barring Hindu and Muslim jurors Rammohun Roy protested.
- ^{xxxvi} He started a journal in Bengali and the other in Persian.
- ^{xxxvii} See Sophia Dobson Collet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, *ibid.* p. 11.
- ^{xxxviii} *Dialogue Between a Theist and an Idolater, Bhrama Pauttalik Samvad: An 1820 Tract Probably by Rajarammohun Roy*, ed. Stephen N. Hay, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), Introduction by Stephen Hay, p. 26.
- ^{xxxix} *Dialogue* *ibid.* pp.53–55.
- ^{xl} *Dialogue* *ibid.* pp. 80–81.
- ^{xli} *Dialogue*, *ibid.* p. 81.
- ^{xlii} *Dialogue*, *ibid.* p. 85.
- ^{xliii} *Dialogue*, *ibid.* p. 101.
- ^{xliv} *Dialogue*, *ibid.* pp. 180–81.
- ^{xlv} *Rachnabali*, *ibid.* p. 600.
- ^{xlvi} Collet, *ibid.* pp. 336–7.
- ^{xlvii} Tagore, *Bharat Pathik Rammohan Roy, Rabindra Rachnavali*, p. 437. There were Muslims such as Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan who also valued western scientific knowledge and with this goal in mind established the Anglo-Oriental College (later known as the Aligarh Muslim University).

- ^{xlviii} With these twin goals in mind he established the Anglo-Oriental College (later known as the Aligarh Muslim University). Ayesha Jalal points out that in an essay written in 1859 on The Causes of the Indian Revolt, that to absolve the Muslims from the charge of being disloyal to the Raj, Sayyid Khan defined the Muslim as a *quam* of those who had adopted India as their motherland and this became the “dominant idioms of the narratives of Muslim identity after the loss of formal sovereignty.” (p. 39). See Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, pp. 27–28 and 39–40.
- ^{xlix} Vinay Dhardwaker, “Formation of Indian-English Literature,” in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, *ibid.* p. 221.
- ⁱ Vinay Dhardwaker, “Formation of Indian-English Literature,” in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, *ibid.* p. 221.
- ⁱⁱ Sunit Kumar Chatterji, *Languages and Literatures of Modern India*, “Introduction” pp. xix–xx.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Collet, *ibid.* pp. 285–6.
- ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Collet *ibid.*, p. 287. Also see Maharshi Debendranath Tagore reference to one attempt on Rammohun’s life in *Brahma Samajer Panchavimsati Vatsarer Parikshita Vrittanta* (New Edition, Sadharan Brahma Samaj, Calcutta, 1360 B.S. p. 26.
- ^{iv} Collet, *ibid.* p. 297–8. Also see Mary Carpenter, *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, (Calcutta Edition: press not mentioned, 1915), p. 222
- ^{lv} Collet, *ibid.* p. 289.
- ^{lvi} See Kaviraj in *Literary Cultures in English*, *ibid.* Kaviraj states, “The high culture of modern Bengal, created through the stunning originality of the nineteenth century, this became a generally Hindu affair,” p. 541.



Raja Rammohun Roy, after a painting by H. P. Briggs, Bristol Museum, Blocks lent by the Prabasi, Calcutta and printed in Collet's *Raja Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta 1900