

Kissory Chand Mitter, (1822-1873), son of Rajnarain, brother of Peary Chand, was educated at David Hare's school and at the Hindu College. He was appointed as a Deputy Magistrate (1846) and later promoted to the post of Police Magistrate, Calcutta (1854-58). His views on the so-called 'Black Act' was much disapproved of by the authority and he was dismissed.

Kissory Chand was the founder of the Hindu Theophilanthropic Society (1843) and of the Association of Friends for the Promotion of Social improvement (1854).

He was the editor of the *Indian Field* (1859-65) until it was merged with the *Hindoo Patriot* to which he contributed regularly. Some of his best known articles were published in the *Calcutta Review* and in *The Bengal Magazine*.

Obaidullah El Obaide, an Arabic scholar, was the Superintendent of the Government Library at Dacca. He jointly won the prize of Rs. 500, in an essay competition organised by Charles Trevelyan (1864), the topic of which was 'The Reciprocal influence of the Mohammedan mind in India'. The essay was subsequently published under the title *A Prize essay* (Calcutta, Calcutta Press, 1877). He translated Rammohun Roy's *Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin* from Persian into English.



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Rammohun Roy
And
Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin

Kissory Chand Mitter
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Rammohun Roy



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RAMMOHUN ROY

BY BABOO KISSORY CHAND MITTER

1. *Biographical Memoir of the late Rajah Rammohun Roy, with a series of illustrative extracts from his writings.* Calcutta, 1834.
2. *Translation of the Abridgment of the Vedant or Resolution of all the Vedas, & c.* London, 1817.
3. *Apology for the Pursuit of Final Beatitude, independently of Brahmanical observances (in Sanskrit).* By Rammohun Roy. Calcutta, 1280. (Hindu Era)

VIEWS, in reference to native amelioration, the present is perhaps the most interesting and eventful period in the history of this country. It might be properly called the age of enquiry and investigation. The metropolis of British India is now undergoing a remarkable transition. Customs, consecrated by immemorial observance and interwoven with the fibres of Hindu society, are unhesitatingly renounced as incompatible with the laws of God and man. Hinduism is arraigned before the bar of an enlightened reason, and will ere long be swept from the land which had so long groaned under its domination. But in reflecting on the change now being wrought by educational and other instrumentalities on the native mind, we are irresistibly reminded of the impetus originally communicated to it by Rammohun Roy. His name is inseparably connected with the great moral revolution. It is, therefore, peculiarly interesting to trace the history of this extraordinary man, for it is, in a great measure, the history of that revolution.

Rammohun Roy was born in 1774. He was descended from a long line of Brahmans of a high order, who were from time immemorial devoted to the duties proper to their race. Religion was their vocation. They led a purely monastic life down to his

fifth progenitor, who, more than a century and a half ago, "gave up," to quote his own language, "spiritual exercises for worldly pursuits and aggrandizement." This change came over the spirit of his family in the reign of that able, energetic, but tyrannical Mogul Emperor Arungzebe. Whether this change was voluntary, or the inevitable result of that bitter and fierce persecution to which the sacerdotal order had been subjected by that Emperor is uncertain. The descendants of his fifth progenitor attached themselves to the Mogul Courts, held offices, acquired titles, and underwent the vicissitudes inseparable from a political life, especially under an absolute and arbitrary Government—"sometimes rich," as he himself assures us, "and sometimes poor, sometimes excelling /355/ in success, sometimes miserable through disappointment." The grandfather held situations of respectability and emolument at the Court of Murshedabad, the capital of the Soubah of Bengal, owing then nominally allegiance to, but being virtually independent of the Delhi throne. He served under Shurajadovla, who was the Nero of Bengal, and took a particular pleasure in burning and consuming to ashes the houses of his Hindu subjects, in causing boats full of men to be drowned in the middle of the Ganges, and in subjecting even pregnant women to atrocities which we dare not describe. The official career of Rammohun's grandfather was commensurate with that stirring epoch which

"Big with the fate of Cato and of Rome"

witnessed the struggles of a company of merchants with the Nabob—struggles which ultimately resulted in the establishment of a mighty and magnificent empire. Rammohun's father, Rammohun Roy, experiencing some ill-treatment at the Murshedabad Court, and not being able to brook the disgrace as most of his countrymen would have done, retired from service, and took up his residence at Radhanagur, in the district of Burdwan, where he had taluks, the patrimony of the family. At Radhanagur Rammohun Roy was born.

Rammohun Roy's mother was a strict and orthodox woman. Though she was wedded to the superstitions of her country, yet her son succeeded in opening her eyes to its monstrous absurd-

ditities. She confessed to him a year before her death, that, notwithstanding she had been convinced of the folly of her faith, she had been too long accustomed to the strict observance of its ceremonies to give it up altogether. "Rammohun," said she to him, "you are right, but I am a weak woman, and am grown too old to give up these observances which are a comfort to me."* She was descended from Brahmans of the highest respectability who have, up to the present day, uniformly adhered to a religious life—a life of penance and devotion—a life of gloomy asceticism which aims at eternal beatitude through the literal mortifications of the flesh. The maternal ancestors of Rammohun were the prototypes of that class of Brahmans who are essentially and emphatically Brahmans—who conform, to the letter, /356/ to all the stringent rules of the *Ahnika Tattina*—who conduct themselves in the same manner as the great-great-grandfathers of their great-great-grandfathers had done.

Rammohun Roy received the first elements of native education at home in accordance with the system, which universally obtains among the upper classes of native society, of initiating the children in the mysteries of *Subankar* under the paternal roof before sending them to a public school. The initiation takes place under the auspices of that model of an educator, a guru-mahashay, who, instead of teaching "the young idea how to shoot," takes good care to cramp and check the development of all ideas except such as might be inspired by his example! It must not, however, be supposed that the boys acquire any mastery over the Bengali language. Far from it. They only pick up a few rules of arithmetic and letter-writing. They

* This was said by her before she set out on her last pilgrimage to Juggernaut, where she died. With such self-denying devotion did she conform to the rites of the Hindu religion, that she would not allow a female servant to accompany her to Juggernaut, or any other provision to be made for her comfort or support on her journey. When at Puri, she occupied herself in sweeping the temple of the uncouth idol. One-eighth of the infatuated pilgrims who crowd to Juggernaut at Dol and Rathjattras every year meet with untimely graves. They fall victims to the foetid air of the place and the extraordinary hardships of the journey.

acquire enough of Bengali to enable them to conduct the duties of a sheristadar and a peshkar, but not enough of it to express their thoughts with correctness or elegance. They acquire enough of it to write a long rubakari, but not enough of it to pen a short decent letter. At the age of eight or nine, they are now generally sent to an English school. It is therefore obvious that the acquisition of the Bengali language—the language of their infancy—the language in which their earliest associations are entwined, forms, properly speaking, no part of their education. Far different, however, was the case with Rammohun. Though he had received his elementary Bengali education from a guru-mahashay, yet he not only attained, by dint of self-study, a knowledge of Bengali,—which to say the least, was unrivalled by his contemporaries,—but afterwards brought the language itself to a very high state of improvement. We confess that it is, as yet, destitute of a literature ; that it may take generations, if not centuries, to bring it to the highest state of copiousness and refinement ; that for elegance, flexibility and precision, it cannot be compared to the Sanskrit, which has been cultivated by a Vyasa, a Valmiki and a Manu ;—yet it must be admitted that it is far more adapted to be a living *national* language. Sanskrit, so called, because of its being a *finished* language—the language of the Gods, the Mohorshis, and the Rishis,—can never be the medium of imparting instruction to the great mass of the Hindus ; as the complexity of its grammar, which Panini and Vopadeva delighted to mystify, renders its acquisition an herculean achievement. All this was known to Rammohun Roy. He therefore undertook to create a Literature in Bengali, and his exertions were crowned with a success that exceeded the most sanguine expectation. The Bengali has /357/ been so vastly improved by his careful cultivation, by his taste and genius, that it can be now successfully devoted to the communication of Western knowledge to the children of this great country. He was evidently the first who consecrated, so to speak, the Bengali language by rendering it the medium of moral and religious instruction. But he experienced the greatest difficulties in embodying in it his elevated ideas on the nature and attributes to God. He

found it totally inadequate to the expression of subtle metaphysical distinctions. He found here the same obstacles which Sir James Mackintosh says "stood in the way of Lucretius and Cicero when they began to translate the subtle philosophy of Greece into their narrow and barren tongue; and are always felt by the philosopher when he struggles to express, with the necessary discrimination, his abstruse reasoning in words, which, though those of his own language, he must take from the mouths of persons to whom his distinctions would be without a meaning." But he obviated these difficulties by the introduction into it of expressive Sanskrit words. To his exertions, therefore, we are largely indebted for the improvement of the Bengali language. He was evidently one of the best, if not the best Bengali writer ever born. He was second to none except it might be to Varut Chunder Roy, — who however prostituted his talents by enlisting them in the cause of libertinism. The court of Rajah Krishna Chunder Roy, of which he was one of the brightest ornaments, and which has been so graphically described by him, afforded the most tempting premiums to such prostitution. The Rajah, who is said to have been the most accomplished gentleman of his time, was a zealous patron of learning.* He appreciated the brilliant and caustic wit of Gopaul Bhar, the metaphysicotheology of Buggonundun Srimony, as well as the poetry of Varut Chunder. But, though gifted with a keen appreciation of intellectual excellence, his highness's taste was essentially vicious. A desire to pander to that taste was the cause of the misdirection of the talents fostered by his patronage. The *Vida-Sunder* of Varut Chunder Roy, the most popular poem in Bengal, and the words of which are as much household words with its people as those of Hamlet and Othello among the people of England, is nevertheless a filthy production. Though it exhibits a rich fancy and almost Shakespearcan knowledge of the practical workings of the human heart, yet all its excellencies /358/

* The great grandson of this Rajah, Srish Chunder Bahadur, seems to have inherited his ancestor's liberality. He has subscribed Co.'s Rs. 3,000, to the New College at Kishnaghur.

are marred by that vicious tone which pervades it throughout. Its immoral tendency cannot be too strongly reprobated. But enough of this digression—into which the parallel we have endeavoured to draw between Varut Chunder Roy and Rammohun Roy has betrayed us. Rammohun Roy's Bengali was truly classical. All his vernacular writings are pre-eminently characterized by a chastity of diction, a suavity of style and a felicity of illustration, not to be met with in the writings of older Bengali writers. They are free from that meretricious orientalism which characterizes so often vernacular productions. But it must not be supposed that the Bengali language, though thus considerably improved by Rammohun, is yet entirely fitted for the use of the metaphysician or the theologian. It is destitute of a scientific nomenclature, which must be either created or borrowed to enable us to transfuse European science into it. We have no reason, however, to despair of the vernacularization of Western knowledge. Since the time of Rammohun, the importance of this great work is fully recognized, and the establishment of the contemplated hundred and one vernacular schools in the Mofussil, with other collateral measures, will, we hope, tend to accelerate its accomplishment; since the demand, which it will create for vernacular books, must inevitably bring in a rich supply.

Having received the elements of Bengali education Rammohun Roy was sent to Patna to study Arabic and Persian, the acquisition of which was then what the acquisition of English is now, a passport to wealth and distinction. The study of these foreign languages first opened his eyes to the absurdities of Hinduism. Struck with the simplicity of a faith of which the fundamental doctrine has been pronounced by its prophet to be "God is but *One*," he instinctively revolted from the unmeaning, frivolous, and disgusting ceremonies of Hindu idolatry. The Maulavis at Patna invited his attention to Arabic translations of the works of Aristotle and Euclid: and it must be easily perceived that the mental discipline thus acquired by the perusal of these works, as well as his acquaintance with the doctrines of the Koran, contributed to cause that vigorous and

searching scrutiny into his national faith which soon resulted in his emancipation from its chains, and ultimately led to the great and successful efforts he made to destroy its empire. Rammohun Rôy, after finishing his course of study at Patna, went to Benares for the purpose of mastering the aristocratic language of his country. At Benares, the seat of the muses, the Oxford of India, he read the Sanskrit and Vedas. Here it was that, properly speaking, he laid the foundation of his greatness. The zeal and enthusiasm with which he devoted himself to the /359/ study of the Sanskrit, and the acquisition of the treasures locked up in it, can alone be conceived from the splendid results to which they afterwards led.

Young as he was, his clear and strong intellect could not fail to discern the absurdities of that superstition which has, from time immemorial, galled and manacled the great mass of his countrymen. Disciplined to the discovery of truth by the process of logical induction and mathematical demonstration, through the writings of Aristotle and Euclid which he attentively studied in Arabic, it revolted from the detestable doctrines of the Puranic system. Saturated with comparatively pure and elevated ideas of God by the study of Mahommedan theology at Patna, it could not hold any fellowship with the puerilities of his national creed. Accordingly, at the age of sixteen, he composed a manuscript calling in question "the idolatrous system of the Hindus." Thus we see that,—at an age, hovering between boyhood and youth, which is seldom devoted to any graver pursuit in this country than playing *Kopoti* and attending school, and which we should deem too premature in any country for so important a decision,—he renounced Hinduism. His renunciation of it, however, to be duly appreciated, must be viewed in connection with the sacrifices inseparable from it. In casting off his allegiance to it, he braved the loss of caste, the loss of ancestral property (for the *Lex Loci* had not then been concocted) and what must have been perhaps more trying to the nerves of the young reformer, the enmity and persecution of his nearest relatives. His composition of the MSS. to which we have adverted, hastened, what could not be long retarded, an estrange-

ment from his father, who was a bigoted Hindu, and could not brook the heresy of his son. It is cheering to contemplate Rammohun Roy at this time. Though literally a boy, and absolutely dependent upon his father for his support, he manfully asserted his principles, despite the obloquy which he knew their assertion must bring down upon him. The tenderness of youth, when associated with such moral courage and such energy and independence of character, challenges our admiration, and exhibits an interesting, we had almost said, a sublime spectacle. It were earnestly to be wished that the educated natives would follow the example of their illustrious countryman much oftener than they now appear to do. Their renunciation of Hinduism must not be lip-deep, but practical. It is not sufficient that they should *talk* of the folly of an observance of the rites and ceremonies enjoined by the shastras, while they conform to them in practice, by performing *shrads*, and marrying their children according to the Hindu mode. It is /360/ not sufficient that, when taxed with their inconsistency, they should plead the necessity of bowing to public opinion. The habit of compromising with idolatry, they must know, is incompatible with a sincere and earnest love of God. It is high time, therefore, that they should try to wipe off the reproach so often cast upon them, that their actions clash with their professions.

The coldness which had been produced between Rammohun and his father by his secession from that religion in which the latter had taken so much pains to instruct him, having rendered his home uncomfortable to him, he began to entertain the idea of travelling. Accordingly, at the age of sixteen, he left his paternal roof. He proposed to travel to different parts of the country in order to enlarge his acquaintance with the different systems of religion prevailing there—to watch their practical operation—and to ascertain their effects upon the character of their votaries. The enterprising spirit which led him to fulfil this design cannot be too much lauded, inasmuch as it so seldom characterizes the Hindus, who are religiously and constitutionally indisposed to all locomotion except in the cause of superstition. After visiting different parts of the country, he proceeded to Tibet, where he

resided two or three years for the purpose of investigating the Buddha creed. The worship of Lama soon disgusted him, and he unhesitatingly ridiculed it before its disciples : the freedom of his remarks gave much offence to them. Prudence might have dictated a different line of conduct, but his frankness and sincerity at this early age gave utterance to his real sentiments. He travelled into other parts beyond the limits of Hindustan till the age of twenty, when his father consented to recall him, and restore him to favour probably through the intercession of his mother.

When he returned, he was met by a deputation from his father and received by him with great kindness. Being domiciled in his father's house, he appears to have devoted himself to the study of the Vedas and the Puranas. With what success he employed himself in these studies, it would be superfluous to inform our readers. From the undivided attention he paid to them, and the zeal and ardour with which he pursued his researches into Hindu theology as developed in the works of Vyas, Manu and Sankaracharya, we are disposed to believe that he had planned, even at this time, that moral revolution with which his name is identified. The evidence on this point is indeed, we confess, hardly sufficient to prove that any systematic scheme should have been so early formed even by so powerful and active a mind. But it is certain that he had been /361/ strongly convinced of the debasing and demoralizing tendency of Hinduism, and had seriously been thinking of making an attempt at its subversion.

At the age of twenty-two he commenced the study of the English language, but made no marked progress in it for the next six years. This was owing, we are firmly persuaded, to his not having brought to bear upon its study that application and strength of mind which had enabled him to master so many languages. He afterwards addressed himself to it with his characteristic vigour and energy, and acquired so highly respectable a knowledge of it as to be enabled to write and speak it with accuracy. But we would have it distinctly understood that his English writings do not furnish a legitimate criterion of his

English knowledge. They were, to a certain extent, the production of his European friends, though the thoughts and sentiments embodied in them owed their paternity to him alone. The matter was his, but not wholly the manner of expression; his acquaintance with the English language was, as we have said, highly respectable, and no more,—though, *for his time*, it might well be pronounced remarkable. In writing his religious and political pamphlets; in drawing up papers or even letters of any importance, he had constant assistance from an intelligent and highly educated friend. He did not send a line to the press without submitting it to his revision. The truth is that Rammohun Roy was exceedingly ambitious of literary fame.

It had been remarked by those who came into contact with him that he wrote English much better than he spoke it. The reason is obvious. What he spoke was really his own. What he wrote was not wholly his own *bona fide* production. In extenuation, if not in justification of this weakness,—for such in part we consider it to be,—we may observe that it was not wholly the result of vanity but of a solicitude to disseminate his sentiments among the European community, for which end it was absolutely necessary that they should be expressed with correctness and elegance. In his own English, unquestionably, they would not have found their way home to the business and bosoms of his friends; and thus a large proportion of the good, which he could alone effect through the co-operation of the intelligent and well-disposed Europeans, would probably have remained undone.

To a man of Rammohun Roy's extensive and varied acquirements, it is however no disparagement to say that he was not an elegant English writer. One, who was decidedly the best Bengali writer, who was one of the most profound Sanskrit /362/ scholar, who had mastered Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Hindustani, who had a tolerable knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, need not take any shame to himself for not having acquired a complete command over the English language.

Rammohun Roy's father, Ramkunt Roy, died in the Bengali year 1210, corresponding to A. D. 1803, leaving another son be-

sides himself, viz. Jugomohun Roy. It has been roundly asserted by the writer of the memoir placed at the head of this article, that Rammohun had been disinherited by his father. This is not true. The assertion owes its origin to the circumstance of his not having accepted any portion of his ancestral property, because of its having been in an encumbered state. As the succession to it would have involved, according to the Hindu Law, liability to the payment of his father's debts, he thought it proper to have had nothing to do with it. The Maharajah of Burdwan, Tejchand, the father, by adoption, of the present Maharajah, instituted a plaint against Rammohun Roy in the Calcutta Provincial Court in 1823, for a balance due from his father on a kist-bundy bond, when his defence was, that inheriting no part of father's property, he was not legally responsible for his father's debts.

The death of his father having developed upon his shoulders the management and maintenance of his family, he was led to seek official employment under the British Government. He was most desirous to obtain a provision which might enable him to devote himself to philosophy and literature. He had been favourably noticed by several civilians. His father and grandfather held responsible and lucrative offices under the Mogul Government. His own talents were such as the English Government might have been glad to enlist in the public service. But the road to official distinction had not then been rendered accessible to the natives. The system of making Hindus, Prime Ministers and Generals, which constituted a redeeming feature of the Mahomedan administration, was swept away with that rule : and they had not yet been allowed to sit on the bench of justice. The enlightened policy of giving them a share in the administration of their country had not been recognized by the British Government. The narrow and mistaken Cornwallis policy of conducting the administration exclusively through European agency, which has since proved such a miserable failure, was then in full operation.

The post of Dewan, since called *sheristadar*, was then the highest to which a native could aspire. Rammohun Roy /363/ wished to get it. With this view he entered, as a clerk, the office of

Mr. Jhon Digby, Collector of Rungpore. Connected with this subject, it is curious to observe that, on his entering office, a written agreement was signed by Mr. Digby, stipulating that Rammohun should not be kept standing in "*the presence*," or receive orders as a common Amla from the *Huzur*. This circumstance proves beyond the possibility of contradiction, that the hauteur of the civilian toward the natives, which has since grown into a proverb among them, and which precludes educated, respectable, and high-spirited men from seeking employment in the Company's Courts, was in Rammohun Roy's time, appreciated as now. What a reflection it is upon the official character of the civilian ? The sovereign contempt with which many of our English Hukims look down upon the Amla is without a parallel in the annals of servitude, and has in a high degree succeeded in alienating the better portion of the native community. The ranks of the Amlas, being, for this reason mainly supplied from the dregs of that community, their corruption should not be wondered at. That they should sell their official influence to the highest bidder, and convert the Mofussil Courts into dens of iniquity and *Joachury*, is quite in the course of things. We would, therefore, strongly urge the desirableness and importance of gradually levelling down that invidious line of demarkation between the covenanted and uncovenanted service which an imaginary necessity or a blind self-interest has upreared. We earnestly hope and trust that the discussion which the question of the renewal of the charter will give rise to Parliament in 1854, will result in the abolition of a distinction, which, in the opinion of the Bentincks, the Munros, and the Metcalfees, is not only unjust in principle, but inefficient in practice.

Free from that "insolence of office" against which the agreement entered into by him with the Collector guarded him, Rammohun Roy addressed himself to his duties with a zeal and energy which elicited the approbation of his employer, and soon earned for him the post of Dewan. By serving in this capacity, he is said to have realized as much money as enabled him to become a Zemindar with an income of Rs. "ten thousand a year." If this assertion be true, it must raise in the mind a

strong suspicion of the moral character of this extraordinary man. But we are prepared neither to substantiate nor to contradict it. Whether his integrity was proof against those temptations which are generally irresistible to the Amla, or whether, like another Bacon, he exhibited a melancholy illustration of the union of intellectual greatness with moral littleness, is a /364/ problem the solution of which is beyond our power. Whether the apostle of Hindu reform, like the high priest of inductive philosophy, sold justice, is a question which, however, interesting, we are not competent to decide. The evidence on this subject is too inconclusive to enable us to arrive at a decision. It is therefore impossible to ascertain, with any degree of certainty, whether there was any difference between Rammohun Roy the Reformer, and Rammohun Roy the Dewan—between Rammohun Roy seated in his study, and discussing with his friends the means of ameliorating the moral and social condition of his countrymen, and Rammohun Roy located in the collectorate of Rungpore and penning *foisallahs and rubakaries*—between Rammohun Roy thundering against Hindu idolatry, and Rammohun Roy conducting the fiscal duties of his office.

If Rammohun Roy did keep his hands clean, and abstain, as in the absence of all positive evidence to the contrary we are bound to suppose, from defeating the ends of justice for a—consideration,—he must have been a splendid exception. Constituted as human nature ordinarily is, it is preposterously absurd to calculate upon a faithful and conscientious discharge of duties by men who, while clothed with all but an irresponsible authority, are paid a pittance which hardly suffices to meet their pocket expenses. The same causes which led the European functionaries before the time of Cornwallis to be more true to their own interests than to those of their Honorable masters, must inevitably operate in producing the same results among the natives. For the system of small pay and large responsibility, heretofore the pet-system of our Government, makes official corruption the rule, and official integrity the exception. Its inefficiency, however, has been recognized by Government in the late increase of the salaries of the Darogahs. While we rejoice

in the adoption of that enlightened policy which has dictated this measure, we would urge its extension to other classes of ministerial officers. The emolument of the Dewan or Sheristadar, the first ministerial officer in the Mofussil Court, is totally inadequate to the responsibility and respectability of the office. We could name several districts and Zillahs where the sheristadar is the *de facto* Magistrate, the *de facto* Collector, and the *de facto* Judge. It is absolutely necessary that the pay of this functionary should be at least doubled before we can have a right to reckon on his integrity.

The more Mr. Digby saw of Rammohun, the more he appreciated him. The esteem which they entertained for each other ripened into a warm friendship which only terminated with the death of the latter. They cultivated oriental and English literature in conjunction—mutually aiding each other. Mr. Digby many years after, while in England, thus bears his testimony to the acquirements and opinions of his quondam Dewan :

By perusing all my public correspondence with diligence and attention, as well as by corresponding and conversing with European gentlemen, he acquired so correct a knowledge of the English language, as to be enabled to write and speak it with considerable accuracy. He was also in the constant habit of reading the English newspapers, of which the continental politics chiefly interested him, and from them he formed a high opinion of the talents and prowess of the late ruler of France, and was so dazzled with the splendour of his achievements, as to become sceptical as to the commission, if not blind to the atrocity of his crimes, and could not help deeply lamenting his downfall, notwithstanding the profound respect he ever professed for the English nation ; but when the first transports of his sorrow had subsided, he considered that part of his political conduct which led to his abdication to have been so weak, and so madly ambitious, that he declared his future detestation of Buonaparte would be proportionate to his former admiration of him.

Rammohun Roy resided alternately in the Zillahs of Rungpore, Bhagulpore, and Ramghur till the year 1814, when he took up his residence in Calcutta. He purchased a garden with a house constructed in the European mode, and furnished in the

European style, in the upper Circular Road at the eastern extremity of this city. Thus we see that, at the age of fifty, he carried into effect his long-cherished plan of retiring from business, and consecrating the latter portion of his life to philosophy and religion. His love of literary retirement amounted almost to a passion. He used to say that a man, after acquiring a competence, should spend his life in the enjoyment of philosophic ease. "Old as I am," said he once to a friend, "I wish I may retire to a solitary cave, and there apply myself to the study of the Vedant and Mesnavi."*

To retire from the hurry and bustle of the world—to revel in the luxuries of lettered leisure—to cultivate philosophy and religion amidst the solitudes of jungles—to consecrate his energies to the furtherance of the great work of his country's regeneration,—this was the *beau ideal* of his happiness. Business, which is the "be-all and the end-all" of the existence of the great majority of mankind, whether located in civilized, demi-civilized, or uncivilized countries, was considered by Rammohun Roy as something too low to engross a whole life. He not only knew but felt the great truth, that man is created for higher ends than the acquisition of rupees—that being gifted with moral, and intellectual powers, nothing short of the cultivation of all these powers can promote his happiness—that there is that in man which the things of this world cannot altogether satisfy, which longs after eternity, and after Him of whom it hath been sublimely said that he "inhabiteth eternity."

Rammohun Roy, being permanently located in the City of Palaces, gathered around him many inquiring and intelligent Hindus. He soon became the centre of a circle composed of men in advance of their age. From this time forward his career as a reformer commenced. From this time forward to the last day of his existence he devoted himself, heart and soul, to the mighty

* The Mesnavi is a work of Maulano Rum, a celebrated Persian poet. It treats of religion, morality and politics. "It is an astonishing work," says Sir W. Jones, "and the highest flights of sublimity can be found in it."

work of his country's regeneration. He laboured day and night, right and left, to promote this great object. All his hopes and aspirations were centred in the prospect of its realization. It absorbed his energies. It engrossed the whole man.

So effectually has the cruel and demoralizing superstition of the Hindus extinguished the religious feelings of their nature, and perverted their ideas of the very fundamentals of divine worship, that they never think of worshipping their God except by means of unintelligible and unmeaning *montras*. These *montras*, which they have been taught to articulate without comprehending their import, are considered to be a passport to heaven. Such lip-deep and mechanical devotion is a mockery of worship, and a downright insult to Him who is *to be loved with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength*.

Rammohun Roy sought to reform the faith and worship of his countrymen. By teaching them to contemplate the natural, intellectual, and moral attributes of God, he proposed to make them worship their Creator "in *spirit* and in *truth*." The extermination of Hindu idolatry and the dissemination of sound and enlightened views of the Supreme Being—of the unseen and future world—of truth—of happiness—of final beatitude ;—this was the great object of his being. And to the furtherance of that object, he unhesitatingly devoted his talents, his time and his fortune. Endowed with an energy of character and strength of intellect of which his age furnished no model, he braved the most formidable obstacles which opposed themselves to the progress of the good cause he had espoused ; and the pecuniary sacrifices he made to promote that cause were indeed noble. Though his fortune was anything but princely, yet he gladly consecrated a large portion of it to its advancement. Never did a reformer labor more zealously, more sincerely, more indefatigably. Never did a reformer unite in himself more happily the urbanity of the gentleman and the shrewdness of the man of the world, with the profundity of the philosopher, and the enthusiasm of the theologian. Of course, it will be understood, that we speak of him *relatively*, as a *Hindu reformer*, rising up, by self-effort,

out of the chaos of Hinduism. It would be unfair to judge of him by the highest standard of Christian civilization.

It is impossible for us to estimate adequately the exertions he made to liberate the Hindu mind from spiritual bondage, and to indoctrinate it with the pure, elevated and living principles of veneration, justice, and benevolence. One of the means he adopted for the realization of this important end, was the publication and distribution of tracts, on moral and religious subjects. He published them all at his own expense, and distributed them gratuitously among his countrymen.

He first appeared before the public as an author by his translation into Bengali of the celebrated Vedant. It is a resolution of the Vedas, or a compendious digest of the Hindu Scriptures, accompanied with annotations on the more difficult passages. It owes its paternity to that intellectual phenomenon of India, Krishna Dayapayana Vyas. Regarding this author and his system, enough has appeared in a previous article to render any additional statements necessary here.

Being written in the Sanskrit language, the Vedant is of course inaccessible to the great mass of the Hindus. By presenting to them a Bengali translation of it, Rammohun Roy did no small service to his cause. The Bengali translation was followed by a Hindustani one. In 1816 he published the English translation of the Vedant, "the most celebrated and revered work of Brahmanical theology." The preface, "addressed to the believers of the one true God," is so interesting and so much illustrative of the doctrines he endeavoured to inculcate, that we cannot resist the temptation of quoting it at length :

The greater part of Brahmans, as well as of other sects of Hindus, are quite incapable of justifying that idolatry, which they continue to practise. When questioned on the subject, in place of adducing reasonable arguments in support of their conduct, they conceive it fully sufficient to quote their ancestors as positive authorities ! And some of them are become very illdisposed towards me, because I have forsaken idolatry, for the worship of the true and eternal God ! In order, therefore, to vindicate my own faith and that of our early forefathers, I have been endeavouring, for some time past, to convince my countrymen of the true meaning of our sacred

books ; and to prove, that my aberration deserves not the opprobrium which some unreflecting persons have been so ready to throw upon me.

The whole body of the Hindu Theology, Law, and Literature, is contained in the Veds, which are affirmed to be coeval with the the creation ! These /368/ works are extremely voluminous ; and being written in the most elevated and metaphorical style, are, as may be well supposed, in many passages seemingly confused and contradictory. Upwards of two thousand years ago, the great Vyasa, reflecting on the perpetual difficulty arising from these sources, composed with great discrimination a complete and compendious abstract of the whole ; and also reconciled those texts which appeared to stand at variance. This work he termed *the Vedant*, which compounded of two Sanskrit words, signifies *the resolution of all the Veds*. It has continued to be most highly revered by all the Hindus ; and in place of the more diffuse arguments of the Veds, is always referred to as equal authority. But from its being concealed within the dark curtain of the Sanskrit language, and the Brahmans permitting themselves alone to interpret or even to touch any book of the kind, the Vedant, although perpetually quoted, is little known to the public and the practice of few Hindus indeed bears the least accordance with its precepts !

In pursuance of my vindication, I have to the best of my abilities translated this hitherto unknown work, as well as an abridgment thereof into the Hindustani and Bengali languages, and distributed them, free of cost, among my own countrymen, as widely as circumstances have possibly allowed. The present is an endeavour to render an abridgment of the same into English, by which I expect to prove to my European friends, that the superstitious practices which deform the Hindu religion, have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates !

I have observed that, both in their writings and conversation, many Europeans feel a wish to palliate and soften the features of Hindu idolatry ; and are inclined to inculcate, that all objects of worship are considered by their votaries as emblematical representations of the Supreme Divinity. If this were indeed the case I might perhaps be led into some examination of the subject ; but the truth is, the Hindus of the present day have no such views of the subject, but firmly believe in the real existence of innumerable gods and goddesses, who possess, in their own departments, full and independent power ; and to propitiate them, and not the true God, are temples erected, and ceremonies performed. There can be no doubt, however, and it is my whole design to prove, that every rite has its deriva-

tion from the allegorical adoration of the true Deity ; but at the present day, all this is forgotten ; and among many it is even heresy to mention it. 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. I do not more than assert that, if correct reasoning, and the dictates of common sense, induce the belief of a wise, uncreated being, who is the supporter and ruler of the boundless universe, we should also consider him the most powerful and supreme existence—far surpassing our powers of comprehension or description ! And although men of uncultivated minds, and even some learned individuals (but in this one point blinded by prejudice,) readily choose as the object of their adoration, any thing which they can always see, and which they pretend to feel, the absurdity of such conduct is not thereby in the least degree diminished.

My constant reflections on the inconvenient, or rather injurious rites introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindu idolatry, which, more than any other Pagan worship, destroys the texture of society, together with compassion for my countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort to awaken them from their dream of error ; and by making them acquainted [369] with their scriptures, enable them to contemplate, with true devotion, the unity and omnipresence of nature's God.

By taking the path, which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahman, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong, and whose temporal advantage depends upon 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. At any rate, whatever men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation ; my motives are acceptable to that Being, who beholds in secret, and compensates openly.

After the publication of the Vedant, Rammohun printed, in Bengali and English, translations of the Kena Upanishad, one of the chapters of the Sama Veda, according to the gloss of the celebrated Sankaracharya, "establishing the unity and the sole omnipotence of the Supreme Being, and that He alone is the object of worship." The Upanishads constitute the least exceptionable portion of the Hindu scriptures. The Vedas consist of two portions, viz. : the *Karmakand* and *Gyankand*. The former

inculcates the worship of the elements and the performance of rites and ceremonies. The latter, to which the Upanishads belong, treats of the existence and attributes of God. The one is the exoteric and the other the esoteric part of the Hindu religion. The object of his translating the Upanishad was to prove that the performance of the absurd rites and ceremonies inculcated by the Karmakand, and the celebration of the Pujahs inculcated by the Purans, far from being sanctioned by, is seemingly repugnant to what appeared to be the real spirit, not of the Vedas themselves, but of *the better and more rational parts of the Vedas*, viz. the *Upanishads*.

He endeavoured to show that *Advaita*, or unity of the Deity, as contradistinguished from that of *Dwaita*, or plurality of gods, is the fundamental doctrine of the Vedantic system. How far he was correct in holding this opinion, or how far he succeeded in his object is a question which we mean not at present to handle. In the introduction to the Sama Upanishad he says, "this work will, I trust, by explaining to my countrymen the real spirit of the Hindu scriptures, which is but the declaration of the unity of God, tend in a great measure to correct the erroneous conceptions which have prevailed with regard to the doctrines they inculcate. It will also I hope tend to discriminate those parts of the Vedas which are to be interpreted in an allegorical sense, and consequently to correct those exceptionable practices which not only deprive Hindus in general of the common comforts of society, but also lead them frequently to self-destruction, or to the sacrifice of the lives of their friends and relatives." /370/

In conformity with the plan he had proposed to himself of reasoning his countrymen out of their idolatry, by making them acquainted with the contents of the more rational parts of their own scriptures, he published a Bengali, and afterwards an English translation of the Kuth Upanishad of the Yajur Ved, and Mundak Upanishad of the Atharva Ved, and distributed copies of them as widely as possible.

Intense was the sensation which these publications created among the Hindus. Opinions, entirely subversive of the popular

and established tenets of Hinduism, had been pronounced by Rammohun Roy in broad daylight. Liberties in thought and action had been fearlessly assumed both by him and his followers, which shocked the bigoted Pandits and the lazy ghee-fed Babus. The injurious effects of those customs and institutions, which had for ages marked the peculiar character of the Hindus, had been exposed to the wonderment of men taught to venerate them from their infancy. The Vedas and the Upanishads, which were sealed books to all but the privileged few, had been shewn, to be decidedly opposed to the worship of the most popular deities, such as Kali and Durga, and Krishna and Shiva. The prerogative of the Brahmans to expound and study the scripture had been set at nought. The great mass of the Hindus, whose belief in their creed was, so to speak, based on *hearsay*, had been called upon to examine for themselves, nay, invited to pronounce the mysteries and pregnant monosyllable Om. Who could therefore assign any limits to the lengths Rammohun might go? The Hindus looked with trembling anxiety on the results of this terrible innovation. The Kali Yug was at hand. In the *Baito-likhanas* of the Babus, as well as in the Tols of the Pandits, the heresy of Rammohun Roy was the one great theme of conversation. Both the Brahman and the Sudra united in counter-acting the Reformer. The Nyayik, the Mimansik Yogi, and the Puranic, who agree nothing else,—who wage a perpetual polemical warfare among themselves,—who, at a marriage rite, or a shraddha, are invariably to be seen seated on a carpet apart from the rest of the company, and engaged in wrangling on knotty points, relieved only by a dip now and then into their snuff boxes;—all agreed to enlist themselves under the banner of opposition.

The publication of the *Kuth Upanishad*, as well as the application of the term "Reformer" to him by the Editor of the *India Gazette*, led to a controversy between him and Sankara Sastri, head English master in the College of Fort St. George Madras. The Sastri, while he admitted the fact contended /371/ for by Rammohun, that the doctrine of unity, in a certain sense, was inculcated by the Puranic as well as the Vedantic systems,

insisted that Rammohun had no claim to be considered as the "discoverer" of the doctrine. The controversialist, however, justified the idolatry of his countrymen and particularly the worship of the personified attributes of the Almighty, which he considered to have distinct and independent existence. "If a person," says he, reasoning from an analogy more plausible than correct, "be desirous to visit an earthly prince, he ought to be introduced in the first instance by his ministers, but not of himself to rush upon him at once, regardless of offending him. Should a man wish to ascend a flight of stairs, he ought to proceed, step by step, and not to leap up several at a time, so as to endanger the wounding of his legs. In like manner, the grace of God ought to be obtained by degrees, through the worship of his attributes." The indefatigable Rammohun soon published his reply. He disclaims in it the titles of "Reformer" and "Discoverer,"—justly observing that he was commonly stigmatized by his countrymen as an Innovator. With reference to the Divine Attributes, he shews, by ample quotations and excerpts from the Vedas, that the doctrine of their independent existence was obviously incompatible with the fundamental principles of the Vedantic system. Soon after, a Bhattacharjya of Calcutta appeared in the field. He published a letter in Bengali and English containing a fierce attack upon his opinions. It elicited a well-penned tract from him entitled, "second defence of the monotheistical system of the Vedas."

But the opposition of his countrymen to his opinions was not confined to literary warfare. A degree of persecution had been excited against him which it required no ordinary moral courage to brave. His name was coupled with obloquy. So utterly incapable were his countrymen of appreciating his labours, or rather so utterly blinded were they by downright bigotry, that they nicknamed him a *nastik* (atheist). That he was an ungodly man, and aimed at the destruction of all religion, was what they firmly believed. He had been several times threatened with personal violence,—so much so, that he made it a point, whenever he went out, to have a kind of guard accompanying his carriage. That he should be called an atheist

by the bigoted Hindus is by no means to be wondered at. We know that the charge of atheism, the highest in our opinion which one man can prefer against another, usually proceeds from men who are apt to identify mere theism with atheism. The words *scepticism*, *atheism*, or *infidelity*, as generally applied, /372/ mean, when properly analysed, only a departure from national or popular religion. The Mahommedans call every body an infidel or an atheist who does not believe in the Alkoran. The educated native, who dares to disown the doctrines of Hinduism, is called by his idolatrous countrymen a *mlechha* and a *nastik*. Every nation on the face of the earth, and from the dawn of history to the present moment, has branded with the opprobrium of infidelity all those who, persuaded of the absurdities of the national and ancestral faith, embrace purer and more elevated views of religion.

That Rammohun Roy entertained the highest respect for the practical part of the Christian religion does not admit of dispute. No one could more thoroughly appreciate and venerate the code of morality inculcated in the Bible. That it was the purest, the most elevated, the most sublime code in the world, was cheerfully admitted by him. He had acquired the Hebrew and Greek languages in order to be able to read the scriptures of the Christians in the original. He had afterwards studied the Old Testament with a Jewish rabbi and the New Testament with some Christian divines. After having matured the fruits of his researches into the Christian and Hindu scriptures, he published in 1820, anonymously, his celebrated work, "The Precepts of Jesus the guide to Peace and Happiness." It consists principally of selections from the first three gospels. In the Preface to this work he says :—

This simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas, to high and liberal notions of one God, who has equally subjected all living creatures, without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain, and death ; and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over nature ; and is also so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their

various duties to God, to themselves and society, that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form.

The publication of this work brought upon him an attack far more formidable than any he had encountered from his countrymen. In the first No. of the *Friend of India* (quarterly series) there appeared an elaborate and learned article, "Observations on certain ideas contained in the Introduction to the Precepts of Jesus the Guide to Peace and Happiness." This elicited a reply from Rammohun, under the signature of "A Friend to Truth," in "An Appeal to the Christian Public." The Appeal led to a reply from the *Friend of India*, and to a second Appeal in Rammohun Roy's own name, which again called forth an attack upon him from the same journal. The /373/ first two appeals had been printed at the Serampore Press, but the proprietor having expressed some conscientious scruples about printing the "Final Appeal," Rammohun forthwith purchased types, and set up the "Unitarian Press, Dharmatollah." His "Final Appeal," as well as all his subsequent works were printed at this press.

It was amidst the sensation occasioned amongst the European and the enlightened portion of the native community, by the publication of the appeals of Rammohun, and the counter-appeals of the "Friend," that Brojomohun Majumdar, a friend and disciple of the Hindu reformer, published an essay entitled, "Scriptures on the Present System of Hindu Monotheism," in the Bengali language. We are inclined to believe, however, that it owed its paternity, at least in some degree, to an intellect superior to that of the apparent author; and our belief is strengthened by the fact of Rammohun's being in the habit of publishing his works either anonymously, or in the names of his friends. At all events it must have been published under the auspices of the Hindu reformer.

This brochure is evidently stamped with the impress of a strong mind. It is a clever and bold attack on Hinduism. It is "a masterly exposure," as Dr. Marshman in reviewing, justly characterized it, "of the absurdities of the Hindu system." All the arguments brought in support of Hindu idolatry are unan-

swerably refuted. The tomfooleries of the Hindu mode of worship are held up to merited ridicule and contempt. It displays a profound acquaintance with the Hindu Shastras. In depth of argumentation, energy of diction, and keenness of satire it is surpassed by few Bengali works. But independently of its merits, we hail it as the first production of the kind by a native in his own language. That in the heart of Calcutta, the very stronghold of wealthy bigotry, there should arise a respectable Hindu to expose the absurdities of Hinduism, was a cheering illustration of the progress of improvement, and an auspicious omen of good things to come.

Though the exertions of Rammohun Roy to subvert Hinduism and disseminate purer and more elevated notions of religion and morality had alienated from him the great mass of his countrymen, and brought down upon him not only unmerited obloquy, but a large amount of persecution ;—yet it is comforting to know that they were appreciated by the thinking portion of the natives. The seceders from the ranks of Hinduism daily increased and joined his standard.

Several intelligent, respectable, and opulent natives, in whom we recognize some of the present leaders of the native /374/ society, embraced his views. "The ground which I took," says he in one of his letters before us, "in all my controversies was not of opposition to Brahmanism, but to a perversion of it ; and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmans 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 relations and others, began to adopt the same sentiments." He soon became the leader of a sect, the basis of whose creed was the unity of Deity in opposition to polytheism. It was composed of men who had been taught to think boldly, and who had been strongly persuaded of the evils of that idolatry which had dwarfed the national mind. They therefore readily joined him in establishing a society for putting down that idolatry. The *Brahma Sumaj* was established in 1828. The

Shabha holds weekly meetings on Wednesday evenings, when the Vedas are read and expounded, and discourses in Bengali are delivered. The subjects embraced by the discourses, relate to general principles in morals and religion. The meetings, "open to men of all persuasions," are now attended by considerable numbers. They always conclude with the singing of hymns composed by Rammohun Roy himself and his friends. The other means, adopted by the society for the realization of its object, are the preparation and publication of Bengali Tracts on moral and religious subjects and the reprinting of Sanskrit works on Vedantism.

The excitement, created by this organization, was proportioned to the magnitude of the change aimed at by its founder. That the veil of mystery, which had enshrouded from time immemorial, the more sacred portion of the Hindu scriptures should be unceremoniously torn open, and its contents revealed to the irreverent gaze of those who had been studiously precluded, by interested priestcraft, from even a superficial acquaintance with them—that the *Gāyatri* should be pronounced before not only the *sudra*, but the *mlechha*—that the *sudra* and the *mlechha* should be called upon to participate in the worship of *Brahma*;—this could not fail to shock the feelings of the Hindus and impel them at last to adopt some strenuous measures for counteracting the efforts of the *Brahma Dol*. They established the *Dharma Shabha*, with the avowed object of upholding Hinduism in all its integrity, and preserving its laws and institutions from the inroads of the *Brahma Shabha*. This corporation soon increased in numbers and in strength. The success which had attended its exertions showed that the national character of the Hindus pre-eminently distinguished by a spirit of exclusiveness and disunion, and an apathetic indifference to all but the animal wants of life,—had changed for once. The noise of theological controversy reverberated throughout the country. The Hindu community became divided into two great parties, the *Brahma Shabha* party and the *Dharma Shabha* party. The principles of these *Shabhas* carried on their warfare in every part of native society, in every *Tol*, in every *Baitokhana*, in every *Dalan*, in

every Chondimundub, in every Zenana. Sometimes the bigotry and fanaticism of the Dharma party, seemed to triumph over the Vedantism of the Brahma Shabha. Sometimes the Brahma Gyanis seemed to carry every thing before them.

Though the influence, exercised by the Dharma Shabha over the Hindus, was at one time all but omnipotent, yet we rejoice to know that it is now on the wane, and that the days of the Shabha itself are numbered. It has been rent in twain, and ceased to enlist the real sympathies of the Hindu public. Every educated and intelligent native would, we are sure, cordially participate in our wish for the immediate dissolution of a society, which preaches the doctrine of non-intercourse, and aims at the laceration of domestic and social ties. But the Shabha distinguished itself not only by its inquisitorial proceedings but by its opposition to every liberal measure. One of its first movements was, we believe, the presentation of a petition to Government *against* the abolition of the Suttee (Sati) rite, and one of its last movements has been the presentation of a similar petition against the Lexi Loci, in reference to the xi, xii and xiii clauses, emphatically called the *liberty of conscience clauses*,—abolishing that portion of the Hindu law which inflicts forfeiture of ancestral property on persons renouncing the Hindu or Mahomedan religion.

The Suttee rite, in the perpetuation of which the Dharma Shabha had been deeply interested, was one of the monster evils of this country. It had led thousands and tens of thousands of women to an untimely grave. Deluded by the hopes of perennial happiness, they performed the rite of *Sha[ha]maran*, i.e., burnt themselves alive with the bodies of their deceased husbands. The banks of the Bhagirathi exhibited for centuries the horrid spectacle of the *chulli* blazing fearfully, over the dead and the living ! Rammohun Roy deeply felt for these infatuated victims of superstition. His heart bled at the horrors of *Sha[ha]maran* and *Anamaran*. He had always openly, and in no measured terms, denounced this inhuman and diabolical rite. He published in 1820, for general circulation, a /376/ tract both in Bengali and English languages entitled, "A conference between an advocate for, and

an opponent of, the practice of burning widows alive." This was followed by a second conference which he dedicated to the Marchioness of Hastings. The object of these publications was to show that the rite of Suttee, though tolerated by Hariit, Ungira and other inferior authorities, was by no means clearly sanctioned by Manu, and decidedly opposed to the tenets of the Vedas. By excerpts from the principal Shastras, he proved that these appeared to assign greater merit to a life of purity and austerity on the part of the widows than to the performance of the *Shahamaran*.

The unanswerable arguments embodied in the "Conferences," silently paved the way for the abolition of this rite. Though the necessity of such abolition had been admitted by the Government as early as 1805, yet nothing was done towards it, because of the interference with the Hindu religion which it was supposed to involve.*

The "Conferences" contributed to dispel this error; and towards the close of 1829, Lord William Bentinck—a name enshrined in the hearts of the natives—at once abolished a rite not only horrid and revolting but fraught with incalculable mischief. When the Dharma Shabha got up the remonstrance we have alluded to, Rammohun Roy, in spite of personal outrage, led a deputation who presented an address to the Governor-General, embodying the grateful acknowledgments of the enlightened portion of the native community for this "everlasting boon" conferred on their country. His indefatigable exertions in putting down this rite, as well as in elevating the females of this country from that state of intellectual abasement into which they are sunk, cannot be sufficiently lauded.

In the early part of 1830, an event occurred which signally illustrated his genuine liberality of sentiment. The Founder of

* Mr. Secretary Dodswell, in writing to the Register of the Nizamut Adawlut, of the Suttee rite, says, "*Should* this practice be not grounded on any precept of their law, the Governor-General would hope that the custom, which at present prevails among Hindu women of burning themselves with the bodies of their deceased husbands, might gradually but not immediately be altogether abolished,"

the General Assembly (now Free Church) institution, on his arrival in this country, was introduced to him, and propounded those educational views which have since been so largely carried out in practice. Rammohun expressed his warmest approbation of them, declaring that all education ought to be based on religion and that he saw no evil but much good likely to result to his countrymen from the teaching of the Chirstian /377/ Bible as a class book in schools. More than this, he practically assisted the Rev. Doctor, in every way in his power, in founding his proposed institution—reserved for the use of it the hall of the Brahma Shabha, then recently vacated for the one since occupied—attended daily for upwards of a month, and often afterwards, to encourage the boys and reconcile them to the reading of the Bible. He approved of the institution's being daily opened with prayer, and recommended the use of "the Lord's Prayer," as being, in his view, the most compendious, and at the same time, the most comprehensive form of prayer in any book or language. For these and other services we have often heard the Rev. Founder of the institution speak of Rammohun Roy with mingled emotions of affection, gratitude, and respect.

Rammohun Roy had cherished for some years a strong desire to visit Europe, and "obtain," as he says in one of his letters, "by personal observation a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion and political institutions." He longed especially 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 Lockes, of Bacons, of Newtons, of Hampdons, and of Watts.

The labors in which he was engaged, tended to postpone for some time the fulfilment of this desire. The success, however, with which they were afterwards crowned (as evidenced in the increase of his party and the spread of his views,) as well as the anticipated parliamentary discussion on the renewal of the Company's charter, induced him to make preparations for his visit. Another circumstance also favoured his design. The emperor of Delhi, considering himself entitled to the revenue of certain lands

in the vicinity thereof, had applied to the Court of Directors. The subject had been considered by that body and afterward by the Board of Control : and it was determined that the Mogul received all that he originally agreed to accept, and all that he was entitled to, in law or equity. The emperor, resolved to try the experiment of an appeal to the king of England, had appointed Rammohun his ambassador, with full powers to manage the negotiation, and conferred on him by firman the title of "Rajah."

The announcement of Rammohun Roy's intention of visiting Europe—the land of the mlechas and beef-eaters—excited much speculation among his countrymen. Being incapable of understanding that enlightened curiosity and that disinterested philanthropy which prompted him to undertake the voyage, they /378/ ascribed to him several unworthy motives. But the man who had braved their persecutions—who had triumphed over the formidable obstacles which threatened to neutralize his labors—who had set at defiance the thunders of the Dharma Shabha, and the fulminations of the Brahmins, was not to be deterred by the sneerings and howlings of his countrymen from the performance of a resolution he had deliberately adopted. On the 15th November 1830, the Rajah, accompanied by his adopted son Babu Rajaram Roy and two Hindu servants, Ramrutten Mukerjya and Ramhori Mukerjya, left his native land in the *Albion* bound for Liverpool. The particulars of the voyage have been thus graphically described by a fellow traveller who is now among us, and who has been for many years connected with our periodical literature :

On ship-board Rammohun Roy took his meals in his own cabin, and at first suffered considerable inconvenience from the want of a separate fire place ; having nothing but a common earthen *chula* on board. His servants too, fell desperately sea-sick (though, as if his ardour supported him against it, he himself never felt this malady at all) and took possession of his cabin, never moving from it, and making it as may be easily conceived, no enviable domicile ; in fact, they compelled him to retreat to the lockers ; but still the kindness of his nature would not allow him to remove them. The greater part of the day he read, chiefly, I believe, Sanskrit and Hebrew. In the forenoon and the evening he took an airing on deck, and always

got involved in an animated discussion. After dinner, when the cloth was removed, and the desert on table, he would come out of his cabin also, and join in the conversation and take a glass of wine. He was always cheerful, and so won upon the esteem of all on board, that there was quite a competition who should pay him the most attention, and even the sailors seemed anxious to render him any little service in their power. In a gale of wind he would be upon deck, gazing at the foam-crested surges as they roared by the vessel, and admiring the sublimity of the scene. On one occasion I brought on deck the 'Ocean Sketches,'* and read to him the first piece, entitled 'The Breeze':

'The distant haze, like clouds of silvery dust
 Now sparkles in the sun. The freshening breeze
 Whitens the liquid plain; and like a steed
 With proud impatience fired, the glorious ship,
 Quick bounds exultant, and with rampant prow,
 Off flings the glittering foam. Around her wake,
 A radiant milky way, the sea-birds wave
 Their circling flight, or slowly sweeping wide
 O'er boundless ocean, graze with drooping wing
 The brightly crested waves. Each sudden surge,
 Up-dashed, appears a momentary tree,
 Fringed with the hoar frost of a wintry morn;
 And then, like blossoms from a breeze-stirred bough,
 The light spray strews the deep,
 How fitfully the feeble day-beams pierce [379]
 The veil of heaven! On yon far line of light,
 That like a range of breakers, streaks the main,
 The ocean swan—the snow-white Albatross,
 Gleams like a dazzling foam-flake in the sun!—
 Gaze upward—and behold, where parted clouds
 Disclose ethereal depths, its dark-hued mate
 Hangs motionless on arch-resembling wings,
 As though, 'twere painted on the sky's blue vault.
 Sprinkling the air, the speck-like petrels form
 A living shower! A while their pinions gray
 Mingle scarce-seen among the misty clouds,
 Till suddenly their white breasts catch the light,
 And flash like silver stars!'

He recognized at once the fidelity of this picture; although not much given to poetical reading.

* By D. I. R.,—a signature too well known in our Indian Literature to require any further explication here.

The *Albion* arrived at her destination on the 8th April 1831. The Rajah landed the same day at Liverpool and took up his lodging at one of the hotels there. His arrival in England, which he had long wished to visit and where his fame had preceded him, excited a considerable degree of interest. His arrival too was at a period of extraordinary political fermentation. The whole nation had been wrought up into a state of overpowering excitement. Reform was then the one great subject which agitated the whole country. Rammohun Roy became a zealous and enthusiastic advocate of it. He saw at once the bearings of the great national measure which was calculated, in his opinion, to "promote the welfare of England and her dependencies, nay of the whole world."

No sooner was the advent of the great Brahmin philosopher known in Liverpool than almost every man of distinction in the place hastened to call upon him. One of the first visits he received was from the three sons of the celebrated William Roscoe. They came, not merely on their own account, but to convey to him the "affectionate greeting" of their distinguished parent. Roscoe had not for years quitted his apartment—being troubled with a paralytic affection which incapacitated him from assuming any other than a recumbent posture. When Rammohun arrived he was confined to his death-bed, and was not allowed to receive any visit. He made an exception, however, in favour of Rammohun, with whom he had before corresponded. The interview was deeply interesting and affecting; interesting, because an event which was the theme of their conversation, viz. Reform, was one to which both had looked forward as a consummation devoutly to be wished for, but as one of those contingencies which was scarcely within the range of early probability; and affecting, because they felt that this cheering interchange of sympathies, this /380/ delightful and unreserved expression of sentiments, must soon be terminated by the stern fiat of that dread tyrant under whose relentless grasp one of them seemed to be already writhing. This proved, as they had anticipated, their first and their last interview on this side of eternity. Rammohun Roy heard of Roscoe's death while residing in London.

This introduction to the historian of the Medici took place at the well-known house in Lodge-Lane ; and though there were none present at the interview except the two great men and one of Roscoe's sons, yet the room below was crowded with the gentility of Liverpool. Many and eager were the enquiries about the stranger's political and religious opinions—his habits, and his object in visiting England. They were hushed when he returned from the sick chamber, with agitated countenance and moistened eyes. As soon as he recovered from the effects of his interview, he reciprocated the cordial greetings of those around him, and got into a very interesting and animated discussion with some gentlemen. Thus it was that at Mr. Roscoe's house a Hindu was, for the first time in Great Britain, heard zealously and earnestly advocating civil and religious liberty throughout the world—and talking of the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*—the Whigs and Tories—Lord Grey and Reform.

The first public place he attended at Liverpool was Dr. Grundy's Unitarian Chapel. The sermon was, *apropos* to the occasion, in exposition of the duty of unlimited charity in our judgments of the creeds of other men, and of their principles of belief. He listened to it with the utmost attention, and afterwards expressed himself very much pleased with it. When the sermon was over, the scene that ensued was curious enough. The congregation, instead of dispersing, thronged up every avenue to get a near view of the great Brahmin philosopher ; and it was not till they had heard him address them in their own language and shaken hands with him, that they could be prevailed upon to allow him to return.

At Liverpool, Rammohun Roy got acquainted with Dr. Spurzheim. Though the great phrenologist and the great reformer met often and were good friends, yet the latter never hesitated to laugh at the science of the former. The bump of good nature being however largely developed in Spurzheim, he used simply to observe when thus attacked, that if his friend would only study the facts on which phrenology was based he would change his opinions. Spurzheim was very anxious to get a cast of the head of Rammohun Roy ; and though he was promised

that he should be permitted to take one, yet the promise, we know not why, was not fulfilled. One of the /381/ visits which Rammohun received in Liverpool is described with great *naivete'* by one of his friends, who was, we believe, present on the occasion :

While he was at Liverpool he received a call from a gentleman with whom he was much amused ; his visitor, a retired Indian officer of the old school, with a squat figure, a jolly face, and a conscious smile of self-satisfaction playing on his features, was much more gifted with good nature than good sense or good taste. As soon as he saw the Hindu philosopher, he began addressing him in that elegant dialect in which Europeans in this country make their coup d'essai in Eastern languages. *Ucha, toom Bengali, hum Bengali, toom Bengali*, well, *Kysa hy Sahib ?* Then turning to the young Rajah, who was present, "*Ah Chuckera (Chokra), well, Kitna burras ?*" (or rather *brass* as he made it) *Kysa Mulk (Mooluk) Utcha hy ?* and so on ; to all which Rammohun gracefully bowed. At length, the gallant officer was informed, that the gentleman he was addressing spoke English as well as he did (in truth he spoke it more correctly.) It appeared that he came as a delegate from no less potentate than the mayor, who, fearful of compromising his dignity by calling himself, had deputed his friend to suggest the propriety of the distinguished stranger's calling upon this high civil functionary, and to hint that if he did, the honour would be acknowledged by an *invite* to a Lord Mayor's dinner ; and the intimation was delivered with an air of importance, which seemed to imply, "Think of that, Master Brooke." It happened, however, that the party he addressed, had not formed exactly the same lofty estimate of its importance as his visitor, and therefore declined the invitation with cold ingratitude ; and when the Major was gone, he vowed, using an emphatic English expression, that if the mayor wanted to see him, he might call upon him as his superiors had done, and as it seemed to me, that hospitality, propriety, and good feeling demanded ; but mayors are not always, it must be confessed, possessed of taste,—

'Unless it be
For calipash or calipee.'

And so our friend lost the opportunity of making his bow to the Mayor of Liverpool.

Rammohun Roy's stay in Liverpool was not long. As he travelled up to London he was delighted with observing the

indubitable and living proofs of wealth, civilization and refinement which the country exhibited. The splendid villas, the smiling cottages with their well-trimmed gardens, the magnificent prospects, the railroads, the canals and the bridges ; all afforded a rich banquet to his eyes, and were eagerly recognized by him as the triumphs of that knowledge, that industry, that energy, that public spirit which had given England her preeminence among the nations of the earth, and the lack of which had rendered his own country the abode of misery and destitution. He stopped at Manchester to visit the great factories. The machinery, which seemed to live, and breathe, and move before him, attracted his attention and admiration ; but the scene that ensued at the great metropolis of manufacturing industry was curious and interesting. All the work people, men, women /382/ and children, left work and rushed in crowds to see the "*great King of Ingec.*" After shaking hands with many of the "great unwashed," he turned round and addressed them, "hoping they would all support the king and his ministers in obtaining reform." His appeal was cordially responded to with loud shouts of "the King and Reform for ever."

The Rajah arrived in London at night and was set down at a filthy inn in a filthy part of the town. He had intended to remain there till morning, but the "abominable odours," that regaled his olfactory nerves in the bedroom allotted to him necessitated him to leave. He ordered a coach and set off to the Adelphi Hotel where he arrived at 10 o'clock, P.M. When he had retired to rest, and it was nearly midnight, Bentham called at the hotel, and left a laconic and characteristic note for him :— "*Jeremy Bentham to his friend Rammohun Roy.*" The visit of the utilitarian Philosopher to the Hindu Reformer was a compliment which the latter fully appreciated, It was indeed a higher distinction than his subsequent linonization by the British people. That Bentham—who had secluded himself as it were from the world—who had made it a point to refuse all invitations to the convivial board, in order that he might "consecrate," to quote his very words, "every moment of his life to the service of mankind"—should have left his hermitago, for the purpose

of seeing Rammohun Roy, was an unequivocal proof of his admiration for this enlightened and extraordinary Hindu. They afterward met each other, and it must have been a very interesting sight to have seen these two great men engaged in conversation on the greatest-happiness principle, in reference to politics and morals, on the condition of the natives, and on the administration of the East India Company. "Rammohun Roy," said the venerable founder of the utilitarian school, "has cast off three hundred and thirty millions of gods and has learnt from us to embrace reason in the all-important field of religion." He became so great an admirer of him, that he addressed him as his "intensely-admired and dearly-beloved collaborateur in the service of mankind."

No sooner was his arrival in London announced, than many of the most distinguished men crowded to see him. He had scarcely got into his lodgings in Regent-Street when his door was besieged with carriages, from 11 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon. The urbanity of his manners and the suavity of his disposition, fascinated those with whom he came in contact; and the familiarity he discovered with every topic connected with the institutions, opinions, and religion of England, as well as his liberal views on all subjects, astonished even those who were prepared to find in him an enlightened and extraordinary man.

The recognition of his official relation and title by the ministers afforded an indubitable evidence of the estimation in which he was held by them. When we remember how much the people of England are ordinarily disposed to lionize distinguished foreigners, we should not at all be surprised at the splendid reception he met with from them. He mixed with the first circles. He was courted by the rich and the powerful. Not only the ex-Judges, and ex-Councillors, but ex-Governors sought his friendship. Many of the "nabobs," whose *huzurs* did not condescend to take any notice of him in this country, and who would not have allowed him to wait upon them at their *kacharies* without being slipshod, were all eager to claim the honor of his acquaintance. Though many of the Earls and

Marquisses and Dukes wanted only to lionize him, and turn him to account as an attraction at their *soirees*, yet there were several men who appreciated him, and sought his company with a view to acquire information on India. Among these were Lord Brougham, Sir W. Horton, Sir Henry Strachy and Sir Charles Forbes. With Lord Brougham, or rather with Henry Brougham,—for then this great man was known only as the bold and uncompromising advocate of popular education and the abolition of slavery—Rammohun Roy lived on terms of the closest and most confidential intimacy.

Not only the greatest men in the kingdom, but royalty itself delighted to do him honor. He was presented to the King by Sir J. C. Hobhouse, the then president of the Board of Control, and his Majesty assigned him a place at the Coronation among the ambassadors. On the opening of the London Bridge, he was invited by his Majesty to the dinner which was given in celebration of that event. The Court of Directors, though they refused to recognize his embassy and his title, treated him with honor. They entertained him at a public dinner on the 6th July, in the name of the Company at the London Tavern.

In accordance with the avowed object of his visit to Europe, he frequented every kind of assemblage, religious, political, literary, or social. He was to be seen in the drawing-room of the nobleman, as well as in the study of the humble man of letters—in parliament, listening to the impassioned eloquence of the champions of the Reform bill, as well as in the church, following the preacher in his sublime flights to eternity.

The charms of enlightened Female Society were highly /384/ appreciated by the Rajah. The amiability of his manners, and the orientalism and deferential respect of his address, rendered him in return an especial favourite with the ladies. Though born in a country where the females, endungeoned in the Zenana, are sunk in the slough of ignorance and prejudice, yet he knew and felt that humanizing influence which is exercised by female society on European character. It is no wonder, therefore, that he was an ardent admirer of British females. "The particulars of my voyage," says he, "and travels will be found

in a Journal which I intend to publish, together with whatever has appeared to me most worthy of remark and record, in regard to the intelligence, riches, power, manners, customs and especially the *female virtue and excellence existing in this country.*"

Besides the society of European females there was another society which he liked, viz. that of pious and enlightened clergymen. He had seen the generous and heroic sacrifices made by some of the Missionaries in his fatherland. He had witnessed their laudable exertions in promoting the moral and intellectual enlightenment of his countrymen. He had seen them take the lead in every thing that had a tendency to improve and elevate the native character. His intercourse with religious persons in Europe, increased therefore his esteem for a class of men who have done so much to benefit their fellow-beings. "If I were to settle with my family in Europe," he used to say, "I would never introduce them to any but religious persons, and from amongst them only would I select my friends; amongst them I find such kindness and friendship, that I feel as if surrounded by my own kindred."

It was not long before the discussion on the renewal of the charter came on in Parliament. Several individuals who had served under the Company, in their civil or military services, or resided in India as merchants or planters, were examined as witnesses. Rammohun Roy was also called upon to give his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

That his knowledge, experience, and patriotism entitled him to speak authoritatively on subjects connected with the government of his country, does not admit of a moment's question. His evidence has been since embodied in a volume entitled, "Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India and of the General Character and Condition of its Native Inhabitants." His replies to the queries of the Select Committee not only demonstrate an acquaintance with the evils of his country, but contain several valuable / 385 / suggestions. They are not characterised by any unmeaning vituperation against the Indian Government, but breathe

throughout a sincere and earnest wish to ameliorate the condition of his countrymen. They are distinguished, above all, by a deep and lively sympathy with the condition of those crushed and prostrate millions of India, known by the name of RYOTS.

The political creed of the Rajah was decidedly that of a liberal. But it did by no means border on ultra-radicalism. He was a reformer, but a moderate and judicious one. In his youth, he was violently opposed to the English Government. But as he saw more of it, and learnt to compare it with the Mahomedan Government, his strong aversion was converted into a warm admiration for its general character. He considered the conquest of this country by the English nation as a providential interposition, calculated to answer important ends in the economy of the moral world. Though he was fully cognizant of the complex organization of the Government, and of all the wrongs and grievances inseparable from its operation, yet he cheerfully and gratefully admitted the manifold blessings it conferred on his country; and was strongly of opinion that the English were better fitted to govern it than the natives themselves, and that the withdrawal of the former, under existing circumstances, supposing it were to take place, would prove a curse rather than a blessing.

Rammohun Roy was a bold and enthusiastic advocate of civil and religious liberty. He watched with intense anxiety its progress in Europe, and tried his best to contribute to its advancement in his own country. When the Spanish Constitution was established, he and his friend Dwarkanath Tagore, to celebrate the event, gave a *Burra Khana* to their European friends. He was a great friend of Mr. Buckingham's, and when Governor Adam signed the death warrant of the "Calcutta Journal," and banished its spirited and philanthropic Editor, he got up, it is well known, the memorable appeal to the King in Council for the liberty of free printing in India.

The influence which the Rajah obtained over the leaders of both the Whigs and Conservatives in England was extraordinary; and it was highly honorable to him that he rendered it subservient, not to his own aggrandisement, but to the poli-

tical elevation of his country. We shall be able to judge of the extent of that influence, when we observe, that an urgent-letter of his prevented the Conservatives from opposing one of the Indian Bills in the House of Lords; and we are sure that he would have carried many ameliorative measures with refer-386/ence to this country, but for the influence of the Leadenhall magnates and the weakness of the ministry.

In the autumn of 1832, he paid a visit to France, where the reception he met with, was as splendid as in England. He was received by Louis Philippe with the highest consideration, and dined with his Majesty twice. Literary as well as political men vied with each other in testifying their regard for their extraordinary guest.

In the beginning of the year 1833, the Rajah returned to the hospitable mansion of Messrs. John and Joseph Hare, brothers of the late David Hare; but he returned with a dilapidated constitution. He had suffered before from bilious attacks. They were aggravated by the climate of Europe, and induced a slight pulmonary affection. In this state he went to Bristol, in the early part of September, to spend a few weeks with Miss Castles, at Stapleton Grove, intending to proceed thence to Devonshire, there to pass the winter.

Nine days after his arrival, he was attacked with a fever. Drs. Pritchard and Carrick attended him. Medicine afforded him, however, only temporary relief. His fever returned with redoubled vigour, and swelled into what the native doctors would call *Bigar*. The delirium was succeeded by a stupor from which he never recovered, and he breathed his last at 25 minutes after 2 A.M. on the 27th September. He had a sort of consciousness that he was approaching his end. He conversed very little during his illness, but was observed to be often engaged in mental prayer. The intensity of his emotions, while thus occupied, was remarkably reflected by his expressive and transparent features.

Just before he had set out for Europe, the Rajah told his friends that, on his death, each sect, the Christian, the Hindu, and the Mahommedan would respectively claim him to be of their persuasion, but he expressly declared that he belonged to

none of them. His prediction has been fully realized. No sooner did he depart this life, than the subject of his religious opinions became an apple of discord. A variety of speculations was hazarded by different parties. While some represented him to be a Hindu, others affirmed that he was a Christian. The church-of-England-party said, that he was attached to their church ; while the Unitarians claimed him for their own. The Vedantists represented him as literally a believer in their professed revelation ; while the Mussulmans contended that he was a follower of the son of Abdullah. We confess, however, that each of these sects had reason enough for wrenching him to its side. From his frequent attendance, while in England, at their /387/ chapels, and his known bias to their doctrines, the unitarians had some sort of right to claim him. The especial patronage which he thought it proper to bestow on Vedantism, made it more than probable that he was a Vedantist. The profuse, though not altogether unmerited laudation he was in the habit of lavishing on the Mahommedan creed, was calculated to produce an impression that he was a believer in the Alkoran. But that Rammohun Roy was not a Mussulman in his creed, it requires no lengthened demonstration to prove. Neither was he an unitarian. We would go further and say,—though it may startle some of our readers who have been accustomed to identify Rammohun Roy with Vedantism,—that he was *not* a Vedantist. What then was he ? This is not merely a curious, but an interesting and important problem, of which we shall attempt to give a solution, as the religious opinions of the Hindu Reformer appear to be still enveloped in mystery.

All speculations, as to his belief in the abstract truth of any religion, founded on his advocacy of certain doctrines connected with it, or his attendance at its place of worship, are obviously futile. For Rammohun Roy was a religious Benthamite, and estimated the different creeds existing in the world, not according to his notion of their truth, or falsehood, but his notion of their utility ; according to their tendency, in his view, to promote the maximization of human happiness, and the minimization of human misery. His patronage, therefore, of any

system of creed cannot be construed into a profession of it. He endeavoured to refine all gross and idolatrous systems into a system of pure monotheism. His works on Hindu Theology do not prove that he was a believer in the revelation of the Vedas, but that he aimed at engrafting a kind of universal unitarianism on it. But we have said that he was not an unitarian. To be sure not. At least, his unitarianism was essentially different from that of the Channings, the Carpenters, the Priestleys, and the Belshams. His was a sort of Catholic unitarianism. It was philosophical theism. It was Natural Religion. It was the religion of many of the ancient philosophers. His advocacy and support of the doctrines inculcated by religions which are in themselves diametrically opposed to each other, though it might apparently evidence his vacillation, was in fact the result of his religious utilitarianism ; for we can confidently assert that, in reference to his religious belief, not the slightest change took place in his mind for the last fifty years of his life. From his first renunciation of Hindu idolatry, at the age of sixteen, to the last moment of his existence, he maintained his religious sentiments, whatever /388/ they were nearly unaltered. The real religious sentiments of the Hindu Reformer are embodied in a pamphlet, written in the most choice Persian, with an Arabic preface. Though printed in his lifetime and seen by some of his friends, yet it was not published until his death ; for he gave it as his last injunction, on leaving his country for Europe, that it should be published after his departure from this world. This work, which is entitled *Tokufut-ul Mowahedeen*, or a Present to Unitarians, discloses his belief in the unity of the Deity, his infinite power and infinite goodness, and in the immortality of the soul. It breathes an uncompromising and inveterate hostility to idolatry in all its forms. While due meed of applause is given to the Mahommedan creed, for being based on what he considered as the great doctrine of unity, the prophetic pretensions of the avatar of Mecca are treated with merited ridicule and contempt.

From what has been said, it is obvious that Rammohun Roy was an eclectic philosopher. He was, according to our humble

opinion, essentially a theo-philanthropist. To promote love to God, and love to man, agreeably to his own view of both, constituted the practical and most important part of his creed. He had a strong sentiment of natural religion. He was deeply impressed with the necessity and importance of religion to society. He had always cherished, and the longer he lived, became the more confirmed in the conviction, that religion was an ineradicable principle of our nature, and absolutely and indispensably necessary to the welfare of mankind. He had read history, and knew that a godless people could never be a great people. He knew that the social fabric would quake and be shattered to atoms, were the ideas of God, of immortality, of moral responsibility altogether obliterated from every mind. He knew that were men seriously to persuade themselves for a moment that there was no God—that their physical and mental organizations had been the work of chance—that the myriads of suns and planets with which immensity is peopled, had all fortuitously leaped into existence—that, instead of being destined to survive those suns and planets, they were the creatures of a day, and that death was the dissolution of their being—that crimes, perpetrated by them in darkness had no witness;—they would at once plunge into the slough of scepticism, and so relapse into primeval barbarism.' -

He deeply felt that the idea of God—the great first cause—the primitive and infinite intelligence—is the most sublime and comprehensive of all ideas. The development of this idea he considered to be the great end of education. He was strongly of opinion that the knowledge of God is superior to /389/ every other. All other knowledge dwindles into nothingness before it. It is the source and criterion of man's elevation. It is the foundation of his happiness here and hereafter. To disseminate, therefore, such knowledge among his benighted countrymen, he considered as the object of his being here below.

Rammohun Roy, though he looked upon idolatry as a downright insult to the Supreme Being, and as necessarily and eternally a sin, cherished a stronger aversion towards scepticism. He loathed and abominated it as something worse than idolatry

—as something more unnatural—as something more incompatible with the constitution of man.

It has been observed by a writer, who is largely quoted in the Biographical Memoir which we have placed at the head of this article that,—

As he is advanced in age, he became more strongly impressed with the importance of religion to the welfare of society, and the pernicious effects of scepticism. In his younger years, his mind had been deeply struck with the evils of believing too much, and against that he directed all his energies ; but, in his latter days, he began to feel that there was as much, if not greater danger in the tendency to believe too little. He often deplored the existence of a party which had sprung up in Calcutta, composed principally of imprudent young men, some of them possessing talent who had avowed themselves sceptics in the widest sense of the term. He described it as partly composed of East Indians, partly of the Hindu youth who, from education, had learnt to reject their own faith without substituting any other. These he thought more debased than the most bigoted Hindu, and their principles the bane of all morality.

This passage, evidently penned by one who knew the Rajah intimately, reads to us an awful lesson. The progress of circumstances, since his death, has clothed it with terrible import. The party, alluded to by the Rajah, is now a large and increasing party. The Hindu community is very much divided between those who worship Durga and Kali, and those who worship nothing—between those who believe in three hundred and thirty three millions of gods, and those who believe in none—those who think the world under the moral government of multitudinous powers, and those who deny all moral government. It is a humiliating but nevertheless an unquestionable fact, that many of those who call themselves educated natives seldom think of religion, and are known to manifest much indifference to it. We admit that they profess to believe in the existence of one God ; but their belief, in nine cases out of ten, is not a living conviction, but a passive acquiescence in a truth forced on them. They oscillate between the creed they have renounced, and that which they profess. In theoretically renouncing the superstition of their fathers, and disembarassing their

minds from /390/ the fetters of that antiquated bigotry which still cleave to the great mass around them, they have not, we deeply regret to observe, embraced a purer and nobler religion. We confess, therefore, that there is some truth in the assertion made by even the best friends of India, that several of the educated natives are practical atheists. This practical atheism, however much we may deplore it, is regarded by men whose judgment is entitled to respect in such matters, as one of the natural and inevitable results of that system of education hitherto pursued by the Government—a system, which, though pregnant with results of the last importance to this country, is not sufficiently calculated to realize the great objects of education, inasmuch as it addresses itself more to the *head* than to the *heart*—to the *intellectual* than to the *moral* man. But intellectual cultivation is not identical with moral and religious cultivation. The one does not necessarily imply the other. That the development of our moral and religious feelings and affections cannot be effected by that of the mental faculties alone, is a truth which, though frequently repeated, does not appear to be sufficiently attended to by those, to whose, keeping the interests of our youth are committed.

That Rammohun Roy should think the educated natives of his time, who had avowed themselves sceptics in the “widest sense of the term,” as “more debased than the most bigoted Hindu, and their principle the bane of all morality,” was quite natural and proper. He thought what Socrates and Plato,—what the sages of his own country, Vyas and Manu,—what, in later times, Bacon had thought—“I would rather believe,” says the great apostle of inductive philosophy, “I would rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and the Alkoran than that this universal frame is without a mind.” It was, therefore, no wonder that the idolatry of the great mass of his countrymen was looked upon by him in a softer and amiable light than the atheism of the *so-called* educated natives. Indeed, so alarming has been the progress of that atheism since his death, that a few Hindu gentlemen, impressed with the necessity and importance of counteracting its pernicious effects, have

established a society which has been noticed more than once in this Review. The *Hindu Theophilanthropic Society* owes its existence, as mentioned in the preface to the 1st volume of its published discourses, "to a conviction irresistibly forcing itself upon every reflective mind, that the great work of India's Regeneration cannot be achieved without due attention to her moral and religious improvement."

It is evident that Rammohun Roy had to battle with both /391/ idolatry and atheism. To wage a war of extermination against the one, and to check the incipient progress of the other, was the work, to the furtherance of which he devoted himself. To say that he had many endowments which eminently fitted him for it would be redundant. He was a man whose genius and energy, under happier circumstances, might have achieved a complete moral revolution among his countrymen. He was by nature one of those who lead, not one of those who follow—one of those who are in advance, not one of those who are behind their age.

Our opinion of Rammohun Roy has already been sufficiently explained. Rammohun Roy was emphatically a great man. His talents were not only varied and brilliant but of an eminently useful kind. He had a sound judgment, a large and disciplined mind. In variety of knowledge, in depth of reasoning, in correctness of taste, he was rivalled by none of his countrymen. Both intellectually and morally he would rank very high among his species. He had not only a strong intellect but a generous heart. No one was more strongly impressed with the conviction, that to do good to man, was among the chiefest of earthly duties and privileges. The golden maxim of doing to others as you would that they should do unto you, was frequently inculcated by him. The exercise of benevolence was associated by him with the greatest pleasure. To relieve the pains and to add to the pleasures of others was considered by him as a source of purest enjoyment. One winter day, as he was returning from his morning walk, he saw a poor sunburnt herb-seller—one of those men who daily cross the river with their basket-load of vegetables—who had alighted his burden

from his head to take a little rest. Finding some difficulty in replacing it, as there was none to help him ; Rammohun Roy generously gave his assistance and with his own hands helped the man to lift his load. We shall not surely be charged with using the language of exaggeration, if we declare that, among the philanthropists and reformers to whom alone the title of "Great."—too often lavished on tyrants, heroes and conquerors, for building their aggrandisement on the prostration of their species,—should be confined and kept sacred, and who alone should monopolize all the places in the Temple of Fame,—a high place must unquestionably be assigned to Rammohun Roy. With an energy which set at nought the formidable resistance he encountered from the slaves of bigotry—with a perseverance which was unwearying—with a moral courage which triumphed over persecution—with a benevolence which was not exclusive but catholic—with a religious aspiration, /392/ which was fervid and impassioned but not impulsive and fanatical—he laboured, according to the light and knowledge which he enjoyed, to liberate the Hindu mind from the tyranny of superstition, and to inoculate it with the elevating principles of a more rational faith.

The life of Rammohun Roy was commensurate with one of the most important and stirring periods in the annals of this country. It embraces the commencement of that great social and moral revolution through which she is now silently but surely passing. When Rammohun Roy was born, darkness—even the darkness of ignorance and superstition—brooded over his fatherland. When he died, the spirit of enquiry was abroad in high places, and was triumphantly exploding antiquated errors. He lived to see a line of demarkation, which, since his death, has been considerably deepened, strongly drawn among the Hindus between the enlightened few and the benighted many. Rammohun Roy was the author of a great religious schism, which is destined to spread and widen. He helped to break the crust of that rigid and unbroken superstition, which had braved the formidable attacks of the Buddhist, and the fierce persecution of the Mahommedan. No native had before

been enlightened and bold enough to do any thing of the kind. He was the first who opened the eyes of his countrymen to the monstrous absurdities of their national creed. He was the first who thundered forth into their ears—which had been for ages accustomed to the invocation of *montras*, and hermetically sealed against all true religion—the great truth that, "*God is One and without a second.*" But, as yet, we have only seen the dawn of a better and more promising era. The number of those, upon whose taste and feelings, and sentiments, education has effectually told, is comparatively very limited. And even in their minds there is hitherto a strange mixture of light and darkness, truth and error. The great mass still grope in moral and intellectual night. But the light that is to travel eastward and westward, and northward and southward, has already begun to illumine the horizon. The days of Hinduism are therefore numbered. The time is coming (and oh, may it approach with lightning speed !) when the millions of Hindustan, who now exhibit a heart-rending spectacle of the prostitution of all that is sublime in religion and divine in worship, shall,—liberated from the thralldom of ignorance, and bigotry and superstition,—learn to love, and obey, and adore the one, true, and living God ! /393/

TUHFATUL MUWAHHIDDIN
OR
A GIFT TO DEISTS

BY RAMMOHUN ROY

Translated by MOULAVI OBAIDULLAH EL OBAIDE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The following is a literal English translation of Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin or "the Gift to the Deists"—a small pamphlet in Persian, by the late Raja Rammohun Roy, on the doctrine of Deism. It has been undertaken at the request of my old and esteemed friend Babu Raj Narain Bose, the president of the Adi Brahma Samaj, in order to put it within the reach of English-knowing people, who have not a sufficient knowledge of Persian to understand the original work, which, although a small one, is written in an abstruse style and is full of Arabic logical and philosophical terms, so that it was not an easy task to render it into intelligible English.

The difficulty of the task and how far I have done justice to the original may be seen by Anglo-Persian Scholar on reference to the original. The fact of the book being written in an abstruse oriental style, is a reasonable excuse for the translation not being in elegant modern English. The work was undertaken in the midst of the bustle of my official and private business, and therefore it is hoped that the generous public will take a lenient view of any shortcomings that they may find in the translation.

Dacca,
The 1st September, 1883.

OBAIDULLAH EL OBAIDE
The Translator.

INTRODUCTION

(IN ARABIC)

I travelled in the remotest parts of the world, in plains as well as in hilly lands, and I found the inhabitants thereof agreeing generally in believing in the existence of One Being Who is the source of creation and the governor of it, and disagreeing in giving peculiar attributes to that Being and holding different creeds consisting of the doctrines of religion and precepts of *Hāṭm* (forbidden) and *Hālāl* (legal). From this Induction it has been known to me that turning generally towards One Eternal Being, is like a natural tendency in human being and is common to all individuals of mankind equally. And the inclination of each sect of mankind to a particular God or Gods, holding certain especial attributes, and to some peculiar forms of worship or devotion is an excrescent quality grown (in mankind) by habit and training. What a vast difference is there between nature and habit! Some of these sectarians are ready to confute the creeds of others owing to a disagreement with them, believing in the truth of sayings of their predecessors; while those predecessors also like other men were liable to commit sins and mistakes. Hence either all those sectarians (in pretending the truth of their own religion) are true or false. In the former case, the two contradictories come together

اجتماع انقيضين .

(which is logically inadmissible) and in the latter case, either falsehood is to be imputed to a certain religion particularly or commonly to all; in the first case *Tarjih bila Murajjeh*

ترجيح بلا مرءج

i.e., giving preference without there being any reason for it (which is logically inadmissible) follows. Hence falsehood is common to all religions without distinction. I have explained this (my opinion) in Persian as it is more intelligible to the people of Ajam, (i.e., Non-Arabians).

GIFT TO THE DEISTS

(IN PERSIAN)

Happy is the time of those persons who are apt to make distinction between the conditions which are found in individuals owing to habit and frequent association, and those intrinsic qualities which are the results of the cravings of nature in species and individuals and try their utmost to make an enquiry into the truth and falsehood of the different principles of religion held by different people unbiassed in favour of any one, and scrutinize even those propositions which are admitted by all without looking into the position of those persons by whom they have been asserted. Because to comprehend the real nature of things created for different purposes and to know the degrees of different acts with latent effects (both of which are the essential parts of human perfection) are themselves quite difficult. Nevertheless most of the leaders of different religions, for the sake of perpetuating their names and gaining honour, having invented several dogmas of faith, have declared them in the form of truth by pretending some supernatural acts or by the force of their tongue, or some other measure suitable to the circumstances of their contemporaries, and thereby have made a multitude of people adhere to them, so that those poor people having lost sight of conscience bind themselves to submit to their leaders and think it to be a sin to make distinction between a real virtue and an actual sin in carrying out the injunctions of their religious leaders. Having a regard for their religion and faith, they think such abominable acts as murder, usurpation and torturing others, although they be of the same species and offspring of the same parents, acts of great virtue. And having an impression that a firm belief (*lit.* pure faith) in their spiritual leaders, notwithstanding the commission of most abominable deeds such as telling lies, breach of trust, theft, adultery, etc., which are heinous crimes in reference to future life as well as mischievous to society (*lit.* public) is the cause of salvation from sins, they always devote their valuable time to reading stories and legends which are full of *impossibilities*

مستبعد العقل

and which tend to strengthen (*lit.* increase) this faith in their past religious leaders as well as in the present religious *expounders*

مجتهدان

Accidentally if any of them having a sound mind and reason, has an inclination to make enquiries about the truth of his adopted creed, he, again, according to the habit of the followers of religions, thinks this inclination to be a result of Satanic temptation and thinking it to be a cause of destruction to him in this world as well as in the next, immediately recants from it. The fact is this, that each individual on account of the constant hearing of the wonderful and impossible stories of his by-gone religious heroes and hearing the good results of those assumed creeds of that nation among whom he has been born and brought up, from his relatives and neighbours during the time of boyhood when his faculties were susceptible of receiving impressions of ideas conveyed to him, acquires such a firm belief in religious dogmas that he cannot renounce his adopted faith although most of its doctrines be obviously nonsensical and absurd. He prefers that faith to all others and continues always to observe the rites and ceremonies of it and thereby he is daily more firmly attached to it; hence it is evident that a man having adopted one particular religion with such firmness, his sound mind after reaching the age of maturity with acquired knowledge of books, without being inclined to make enquiries into the truth of the admitted propositions of so many years, is insufficient to discover the real truth. Rather, that very man sometimes in hope of attaining the honour of being a *Mujtahid* or religious expounder, becomes anxious to invent new arguments founded on so called reason and tradition by the help of his own knowledge and intellect, in order to give strength to the doctrines of his faith. The *Muqallids* or common people following that religion by blind imitation, who are always anxious at heart to give preference to their faith to other religions according to the proverb that "A Hoo is sufficient for (exciting) a mad fellow", making those fallacious arguments the grounds of their dissensions, boast of their own

religion, and point out the faults of the religions of others. If by chance sometimes any one through want of prudence makes any question against any principles of faith of his religion, his co-religionists in case of having power, make over that inexperienced fellow to the tongue (point) of the spear (i.e., kill him), and in case of their having no such opportunity make him over to the spear of the tongue (i.e., overload him with reproaches and slanders). The state of influence of these leaders over their followers and their submission to them have reached such a degree that some people having a firm belief in the sayings of their leaders, think some stones and vegetables or animals to be the real object of their worship; and in opposing those who may attempt to destroy those objects of their worship or to insult them they think shedding the blood of others or sacrificing their own lives, an object of pride in this world, and a cause of salvation in the next. It is more strange that the *Mujtahids* or religious expounders of them also after the examples of the leaders of other religions, putting aside justice and honesty, try to invent passages in the form of reasonable arguments in support of those articles of faith, which are evidently nonsensical and absurd and thereby try to give strength to the faith of the common people who are deprived of insight and discretion.

نَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ الْفَسْأَةِ - رَمَنْ سَيِّئَاتِ اَعْمَالِنَا *

"We seek protection of God from the evil temptations of ourselves and from our evil deeds."

Although it is a fact and cannot be denied, that as mankind are naturally social beings, they are required to live together socially; but as society depends upon individuals understanding the ideas of each other reciprocally and on existence of some rules by which the property of one is to be defined and distinguished from that of another, and one is to be prevented from exercising oppression over another, so all the races inhabiting different countries, even the inhabitants of isolated islands and the summits of lofty mountains, have invented especial words indicating certain ideas, which form the basis of the invention of

* A quotation from the Koran

religion and upon which organization of society depends. As the foundation of religions, is based on the belief in the existence of soul (which is defined to be a substance governing body) and on the existence of the next world, which is held to be the place of receiving compensation for the good and evil deeds done in this world after the separation of the soul from the body ; they (mankind) are to be excused in admitting and teaching the doctrine of existence of soul and the next world although the real existence of soul and the next world is hidden and mysterious for the sake of the welfare of the people (society) as they simply, for the fear of punishment in the next world and the penalties inflicted by the worldly authorities, refrain from commission of illegal deeds. But to the belief in these two indispensable doctrines, hundreds of useless hardships and privations regarding eating and drinking, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, etc., have been added, and thus they have become causes of injury and detrimental to social life and sources of trouble and bewilderment to the people, instead of tending to the amelioration of the condition of society.

Holiness to God ! (i.e., it is strange to say) that notwithstanding these ardent enthusiasms on the part of the *Mujtahids* or the doctors of religion, there is always an innate faculty existing in the nature of mankind that in case any person of sound mind, before or after assuming the doctrines of any religion, makes an enquiry into the nature of the principles of religious doctrines, primary or secondary, laid down by different nations without partiality and with a sense of justice, there is a strong hope that he will be able to distinguish the truth from untruth and the true propositions from the fallacious ones, and also he, becoming free from the useless restraints of religion, which sometimes, become sources of prejudice of one against another and causes of physical and mental troubles, will turn to the One Being who is the fountain of the harmonious organization of the universe, and will pay attention to the good of the society

من يهدي الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلل فلا هادي له *

"Whom God leads (to righteous path) there is none to mislead him and whom he misleads there is no leader for him."

It is to be seen that the followers of certain religions believe that the true Creator has created mankind for discharging the duties connected with the welfare of the present and future life by observing tenets of that particular religion; and that the followers of other religions who differ from them in articles of faith, are liable to punishment and torments in the future life. And as each particular class defers the good results of their own acts and the bad results of the practices of the followers of other religions to the life after death, therefore none of them can refute the dogmas of others in this life, consequently they sow the seeds of prejudice and disunion in their hearts, instead of sincerity, and condemn each other to be deprived of eternal blessings. Whereas it is quite evident that all of them are living here equally enjoying the external blessings of nature (*lit.* heaven) as lights of the stars, pleasure of the season of spring, the fall of rain, health of body, external and internal good, and other enjoyments of life; as well as equally suffering from inconveniences and pains, as gloominess of darkness and severity of cold and mental disease and narrowness of circumstances and outward and inward evils, without any distinction in being follower of a particular religion.

Although each individual of mankind, without instruction and guiding of any one, simply by keen insight into, and deep observation of, the mysteries of nature such as different modes of life fixed for different kinds of animals and vegetables and propagation of their species and the rules of the movements of the planets and stars and endowment of innate affection in animals towards their offsprings for nurturing them without having any object in exchange from them in future, and so forth, has an innate faculty in him by which he can infer that there exists a Being Who (with His wisdom) governs the whole universe; yet it is clear that every one in imitation of the individuals of the nation among whom he has been brought up, professes the existence of a particular Divinity (with particular attributes ascribed to him) and adopts certain tenets following that parti-

cular creed. For instance, some of them believe in a God qualified with human attributes as anger, mercy, hatred and love ; and others believe in a Being comprehending and extending all over nature ; a few are inclined to atheism or thinking the



Dahr (time) or *nature* as the creative principle of the Universe, and some of them give Divine attributes to large created beings and make them objects of worship. These persons do not make any distinction between the beliefs which are the results of a special training and habit and an absolute belief in the existence of the Source of Creation which is an indispensable characteristic in mankind, so that they, through the influence of habit and custom and blindness to the enquiry into the sequence between the cause and effect, believe the bathing in a river and worshipping a tree or being a monk and purchasing forgiveness of their crime from the high priests, etc., (according to the peculiarities of different religions) to be the cause of salvation and the purification from sins of a whole life. And they think that this purification is the effect of those objects of their beliefs and the miracle of their priests and not the result of their own belief and whims, while these do not produce any effect on those who do not agree with them in those beliefs. Had there been any real effect of these imaginary things, it must have been common to all nations of different persuasions and should not have been confined to one particular nation's belief and habits. For although the degree of the strength of effect varies according to the different capacities of persons subject to it, yet it is not dependent upon belief of a certain believer. Do you not see that if a poison be taken by any one, in the belief that it is a sweetmeat, it must produce its effects on the eater and kill him. "*O God, give me strong power for making distinction between habit and nature*".

The founders of religions have made an idea of supernatural acts or miracles for attributing origin of a particular religion to themselves and increasing the belief of common people in them.

It is customary with common people labouring under whims that when they see any act or thing done or found, beyond

their power of comprehension, or for which they cannot make out any obvious cause, they ascribe it to supernatural power or miracle. The secret lies in this, that in this world where things are mutually related to one another by a sequent relation of cause and effect, the existence of everything depends upon a certain cause and condition, so that if we take into consideration the remote causes, we may see that in the existence of any one thing in nature, the whole universe is connected. But when for want of experience and through the influence of whims, the cause of a thing remains hidden to any one, another person having found it a good opportunity for achieving his object ascribes it to his own supernatural power and thereby attracts people to himself. In the present age in India, belief in supernatural and miraculous things has come to such a degree that the people, when they find any wonderful things, the origin of which they can ascribe to their by-gone heroes or the present saints, immediately ascribe it to them, and although there be an obvious existence of its cause, they ignore it. But it is not hidden to those who have a sound mind and who are friends of justice that there are many things, for instance, many wonderful inventions of the people of Europe and the dexterity of jugglers, the cause of which are not obviously known and seem to be beyond the comprehension of human power, but after a keen insight or instructions of others, those causes can be known satisfactorily. This inductive reason only may be a sufficient safeguard for intelligent people, against being deceived by such supernatural works. The utmost which we can say on this matter is that in some instances, notwithstanding a keen and penetrative discretion, the cause of some wonderful things remains unknown to some people. In such cases, we ought to have recourse to our own *intuition* and put to it the following query, viz., whether it is compatible with reason to be convinced of our own inability to understand the cause or to attribute it to some impossible agency inconsistent with the law of nature? I think our intuition will prefer the first. Moreover, what necessity is there that we should believe in these things which are inconsistent with the laws of perception and are not observed personally ;

for instance, raising the dead, ascending to heaven, etc., which are said to have been occurred many hundreds of years ago. It is to be wondered at, that although people in worldly transactions, without knowing a certain connection of one with another, do not believe that the one is the cause and the other the effect, yet when there is influence of religion and faith, they do not hesitate to call one the cause and the other the effect, notwithstanding there is no connection or sequence between the two. For instance, the removal of a calamity by the effect of *duas*

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

or certain prayers or getting recovery from disease by the effect of certain charms, amulate, etc.

When enquiries are made about the mysteries of these things which are so wonderful that *reason* hesitates to believe in their truth, the leaders of religion, sometimes explain for the satisfaction of their followers, that in the affairs of religion and faith, reason and its arguments have nothing to do ; and that the affairs of religion depend upon faith and Divine Help. How could a matter which has no proof and which is inconsistent with reason be received and admitted by men of reason ? "*Take admonitions from this, O people of insight.*"*

They sometimes having a profound knowledge (of logic) begin to argue that it is not impossible for the power of that Omnipotent Creator who has brought the whole universe into existence from perfect non-entity that He should unite life with the bodies of the dead a second time or should give to earthly bodies the property of light or the power of air to travel at a great distance within a short time. But this argument does not prove anything but probability of occurrences of such things while they have to prove real occurrence of miracles of their ancient religious leaders and the modern *Mujtahids*, so it is clear to the men of understanding that there is no *Taqurib*** in this argument.

* An Arabic phrase from the Koran

** *Taqurib* means in Logic agreement of conclusion with quassitum or the proposition to be proved.

Besides, if their arguments were held to be true, then there would be no way for

منع

Manā or questioning the truth of a premise in syllogism, during

مناظره

Munazara or discussion, and the door of rejecting any proposition, whatever it might be, would be entirely closed. Because any one in attempting to prove impossible things might have recourse to such proposition during discussion ; and thus there would be no difference between the ideas of

امكان

possible and *impossible*,

استدفاع .

consequently the whole foundation of composing syllogism and logical demonstration would fall to the ground. While it is an admitted fact that the creator has no power to create *impossible* things ; for instance

شرک

co-partnership with God or non-existence of God or

اجتماع التفاضل

existence of two contradictories, etc.

A VERSE FROM HAFIZ

The disputes of seventy-two sects* are to be excused, because they not finding the truth, have trotted the way of fables or nonsense.

Whereas on account of distance of time the great super-human powers of the by-gone leaders of different religions, are impossible to be proved by a knowledge gathered by external

* There are seventy-two sects among the Mahomedans.

senses, (which, under certain conditions impart a positive knowledge) ; therefore the doctors of different persuasions, relying on the faith of their followers, have made the idea of

تواتر

Tawatur (traditions proved by a series of general report) a means of proving such things. While with a little consideration of the true idea of

تواتر

Tawatur which produces positive belief and a *Tawatur* assumed by the followers of religions, the evil of fallacy can be removed. Because according to the followers of religions *Tawatur* is a report coming down from a certain class of people to whom falsehood of that report cannot be imputed ; but whether such a class of people existed in ancient times, is not known to the people of the present time through the medium of external senses or experience ; rather it is quite obscure and doubtful. Besides, great discrepancies in the traditions of by-gone leaders of each religion, indicate falsehood of their assertion. If it is said that the truth of the statement of the first class of people who gave report of the miracles of their leaders, by eye-witness, is to be proved by the statement of the next class who were their contemporaries, and so for proving the truth of the statement of the next or second class, evidence of the third class (who were their contemporaries) must be added ; because belief in the truth of the statement of the second class also wants a proof, and likewise for the truth of the statement of the third class, evidence of the fourth class ought to be added and so on till it would reach the people who live in the present time, and so this link or series of evidence will come down gradually to posterity. It is clear that man of sound mind will hesitate to reckon that class of people who co-exist with them, to be a truthful people to whom falsehood cannot be imputed especially in matters of religion. Besides a great contradiction is found in affirmation and negation of prophecy and other good attributes of the leaders of different religions and these contradictory

reports are proved also by *Tawatur*. Therefore in taking for granted the truth of the reports of each party, there would be

اجتماع التقيضين

(i.e., admitting two contradictories). And giving preference to one report above another without any ground of preference is

ترجيح بلا مرجح

(i.e. giving one thing preference to another without any reasonable ground). Because each party can equally pretend that the statement of their ancestors was true and reliable, The fact is that a *Tawatur* in the sense of receiving a report admissible to reason from a people whose statement is not contradicted by any one, is useful in giving positive belief. But this sort of *Tawatur* is quite different from the discrepant reports contrary to reason. From this assertion the following arguments (produced by doctors of religion) are easily refuted. They say, *firstly*, that "how are those persons who believe the narratives regarding the ancient Kings owing to their being inserted in history and received by *Tawatur* or traditional series, to be justified in rejecting the facts relating the supernatural works performed by the leaders of religions, which are mentioned in ancient books and are proved by *Tawatur* or traditions of nations, from time to time? And, *secondly*, that how can those who in spite of difference in colours, shapes and manners of offsprings of a person from him, and in spite of the real fact being hidden to them, believe in particular descent or births only by general report or *Tawatur*, should hesitate to believe in the holiness and the miracles of the ancient *Mujtahids*, which are also received in the same way of *Tawatur*?" Inasmuch as the narratives regarding the by-gone kings, for instance, ascendance of a certain king to the throne and fighting with certain enemies, etc., are such facts as were then reliable and unanimously agreed upon; while narratives of those supernatural works are contradicted and are most wonderful. For instance, the birth of individuals of the species of animals from their parents is a visible thing but birth of children without parents, is quite contrary to reason.

به این تفاوت رد از یک اسم نا بجا

"See what a vast difference there is between one way and the other."

Besides, the fact of descent or geneology and the narratives of the by-gone kings are suppositions

ظانوت

and the beliefs regarding the articles of faith of a certain religion, according to the principles of religion, are certain or positive propositions ; so the one cannot bear analogy to the other with this material difference. Notwithstanding this, whenever any doubtful discrepancy arises in the history of any by-gone kings in the matter of descent or geneology, the reports about them are set aside or thrown away from reliance. For instance, the report about Alexander the Great's conquering China and the account about his birth are contradicted by the historians of Greece and Persia, therefore they are not to be believed with certainty.

Some people argue in this way that the Almighty Creator has opened the way of guidance to mortal beings through the medium of prophets or leaders of religions. This is evidently futile, because the same people believed that the existence of all things in the creation, whether good or bad, are connected with the Great Creator without any intermediate agency, and that the secondary causes are all the medium and conditions of their existence. Hence it is to be seen whether the sending of prophets and revelation to them from God, are immediately from God or through intermediate agency. In the first case, there is no necessity of an intermediate agency for guidance to salvation, and there does not seem any necessity of instrumentality of prophets or revelation. And in the second case, there would be a series of intermediate agencies which would not conclude to any end. Hence advent of prophets and revelation like other things in nature depend upon external causes without reference to God, i.e., they depend upon the invention of an inventor. Prophets, etc., are not particularly missioned for instructions of invented creeds. Besides, what a nation calls

a guide to a true faith, another calls it a misleading to an erroneous way.

Some of the followers of religion argue in this way that discrepancy in precepts of different religions, does not prove falsehood of any religion. The discrepancies ought to be understood to be of the same nature as is found in the laws of ancient and modern rulers of the world; that the modern rulers often repeal the laws, framed by the former ones, according to different state of society. So all these forms of religions, also were framed by God, according to different states of society in different times, and the one has been repealed or superseded by another according to His will. My reply to this argument is that the ruling or government of the true God, who according to belief of the followers of religions is acquainted with the particular state of every particle and who is Omniscient and to whom the past, present and future times are equally known and under whose influence hearts of mankind can be turned to whatever He wishes, and Who is provider of visible and invisible causes of everything and Who is far from having any particular object for His own interest and Who is free from whims; has no analogy with the rulings or governments of human beings, whose wisdom is defective and incapable of understanding the end of every action and who are liable to errors or mistakes and whose actions are mixed with selfishness, deceit and hypocrisy. Is not this sort of analogy

قياس مع الفارق

—analogy between two things which differ in essential qualities? Besides this, there are many other strong objections holding the above opinion, for instance, the Brahmins have a tradition from God that they have strict orders from God to observe their ceremonies and hold their faith for ever. There are many injunctions about this from the Divine Authority in the Sanskrit language, and I, the humblest creature of God, having been born amongst them, have learnt the language and got those injunctions by heart, and this nation (the Brahmins) having confidence in such divine injunctions cannot give them up

although they have been made subject to many troubles and persecutions and were threatened to be put to death by the followers of Islam. The followers of Islam, on the other hand, according to the purport of the holy verse of the *Koran*

فاقتلوا المشركين حيث وجدتموهم

(i.e., kill the idolators wherever you find them) and

فشد الرزاق فاما . هذا بعد راما فدا

(i.e., then tie the bonds, i.e., capture the unbelievers in the holy war, then either set them free by way of obligation to them or by taking ransom), quote authority from God that killing idolators and persecuting them in every case, are obligatory by Divine command. Among those idolators the Brahmins, according to the Moslem belief, are the grossest idolators. Therefore the followers of Islam, always being excited by religious zeal and having been desirous of carrying out the orders of God, have not failed to do their utmost to kill and persecute the polytheists and unbelievers in the Prophetic missions of the Seal of Prophets and the Blessing to the present and future worlds* (may Divine Benediction rest on him and on his disciples). Now, are these contradictory precepts or orders consistent with the wisdom and mercy of the great, generous and disinterested Creator or are these the fabrications of the followers of religion? I think a sound mind will not hesitate to prefer the latter alternative. Then, it is to be considered, which of these two is proper, i.e., either to attribute these injunctions and precepts to God or to reject these contradictory traditions at once. For instance, one party on the authority of their scripture, say that prophetic mission has been closed with their leader, and another party claim that the prophetic mission is to end in the generation of David according to an authority from God. And these two sayings are in fact,

اخبار

* Mahomed.

reports or foretellings and not

انذار

or precepts of law that they will be subject to repeal. Because in holding one to be true the falsehood of the other must follow, while the probability of

تعريف

(*change*) or perversion is equally applicable to both. It is strange to say, that after passing hundred of years from the time of these religious leaders, with whom the prophetic mission is said to be closed, Nanak and others in India and other countries raised the flag of prophetic mission and made a large concourse of people their followers by inducement and succeeded. Rather the door of realising their own objects in the form of religious instruction (proselytising) is always open to inexperienced and shallow-thinking people. It is daily observed that hundreds of persons in the hope of gaining some honor or a little profit make themselves subject to various kinds of physical privation and hardship, i.e., keeping perpetual fasting or suspending one of the hands motionless or burning the body, etc., (which are seen among the Hindu ascetics or monks). Hence it is not strange that (in by-gone days) some ambitious persons in order to obtain the honor of becoming leaders of people at large or making themselves objects of reverence of the people should have made themselves subject to hardships and dangers of the time.

There is a saying which is often heard from the doctors of different religions which they quote as an authority for giving strength to their creed. Each of them says that his religion which gives information about future reward or punishment after death, is either true or false. In the second case, i.e., if it be false and there be no future reward or punishment, there is no harm in believing it to be true ; while in the first case, i.e., its being true, there is a great danger for the unbelievers. The poor people, who follow these expounders of religions, holding this saying of their leaders to be conclusive argument, are always boasting of it. The fact is that habit and training make the

individuals of mankind blind and deaf notwithstanding their having eyes and ears. The above saying has fallacies in two ways. *Firstly*, their saying that in the second case there is no harm in believing it to be true, is not to be admitted. Because having faith in the true existence of a thing after believing in its real existence is to be obtained by each individual of mankind ; but putting faith in the existence of such things which are remote from reason and repugnant to experience, is not in the power of a sensible man. *Secondly*, in case of having faith in those things, it may become the source of various mischiefs and troubles and immoral practices owing to gross ignorance and want of experience, i.e., bigotry, deceit, etc. Nevertheless, in case of assuming this argument to be true, from this the truth of all forms of religion is to be proved ; for followers of each religion may equally produce the same argument. Hence there will be a great perplexity for a man to believe all religions to be true or adopt the one or reject others. But as the first alternative is impossible, consequently the second one must be assumed. And in this case, he has again recourse to the enquiry into the truth and falsehood of various religions. And this is the chief object of my discourse.

Another argument produced by some of the doctors of religions, is that it is necessary that we should follow the ceremonies and creeds which were adopted by our forefathers, without any enquiry into the truth and falsehood of them, and to hate those ceremonies and creeds or deviate from them, leads to disgrace in the present world and to mischiefs in the next ; and that such a conduct is in fact a contempt and insult of our forefathers. This fallacious argument of theirs, produces a great effect on the minds of the people who entertain a good opinion and a reverence towards their ancestors, and consequently hinders them from any enquiry into the truth and adopting the righteous way. The fallacy of this argument may be seen by a little consideration. For it is equally applicable first, to those persons who having been founders of some religion (new) attracted the people to themselves ; and secondly, to those who after receiving the doctrines of their leaders, have deviated

from the old way of their forefathers, and tried to pull down the foundation of their ancestors' creeds. If a man only by attributing his own inventions to God, is to be vindicated from such charges, then this is the easiest way to be adopted. The fact is that renouncing one religion and adopting another which was common amongst the ancient people, implies that conversion from one religion to another, is one of the habits of mankind. Besides, the fact of God's endowing each individual of mankind with intellectual faculties and senses, implies that he should not, like other animals, follow the examples of his fellow brethren of his race, but should exercise his own intellectual power with the help of acquired knowledge, to discern good from bad, so that this valuable divine gift should not be left useless.

The followers of different religions sometimes seeing the paucity of the number of Deists in the world boast that they are on the side of the majority. It is to be seen that the truth of a saying does not depend upon the multiplicity of the sayers and the non-reliability of a narration cannot arise simply owing to the paucity of the number of the narrators. For it is admitted by the seekers of truth that truth is to be followed although it is against the majority of the people. Moreover accepting the proposition, *viz.*, the paucity of the number of the sayers leads to the invalidity of a saying, as universal, proves to be a dangerous blow to all the forms of religion. Because in the beginning of every religion there were a very few supporters of it, *viz.*, its founder and a very few sincere followers of him, who had the same object with him and afterwards so many large books and series of arguments have been written and produced like founding a mountain upon a single grass, on the sayings of those few persons, while having a belief only in one Almighty God is the fundamental principle of every religion. Those who prefer the so-called invented revelation of mankind to the natural inspiration from God, which consists in attending to social life with their own fellow species and having an intuitive faculty of discriminating good from evil, instead of gaining union of hearts with mutual love and affection of all their fellow creatures without

difference in shape and colour or creeds and religions which is a pure devotion acceptable to God and nature, consider some especial alterations and bodily motions to be the cause of Salvation and receiving bounty from Almighty God. They in fact, pretend a change in the self of the Deity and think that their physical actions and mental emotions, have power to change the state of unchangeable God. By no means can our actions and motions to be the cause of appeasing the wrath of God and attaining His forgiveness and favour. A little consideration will shew cover this truth.

Verse

چندین فزون شیخ نازد به نهم خس
راحت بدل رسان که همین مشرب است و بس

So many hypocritic acts of Shaikh, i.e., Spiritual Leaders, are not worth a mite ; give comfort to the hearts of people, this is the only Divine Doctrine.

In short, the individuals of mankind with reference to those who are deceivers and those who are deceived and those who are not either, amount to four classes.

Firstly—A class of deceivers who in order to attract the people to themselves wilfully invent doctrines of creeds and faith and put the people to troubles and cause disunion amongst them.

Secondly—A class of deceived people, who without inquiring into the fact, adhere to others.

Thirdly—A class of people who are deceivers and also deceived, they are those who having themselves faith in the sayings of another induce others to adhere to his doctrines.

Fourthly—Those who by the help of Almighty God are neither deceivers nor deceived.

Verse of Hafiz

مبش در پی آزار و هر چه خواهی کن
که در طریقه ما غیر ازین گداهى نیست

Be not after the injury of any being and do whatever you please. For in our way there is no sin except it (injuring others).

These few sentences, short and useful according to the opinion of this humble creature of God, have been written without any regard to men of prejudice and bigotry, with this hope that people of sound mind will look to this with a view of justice. I have left the detail of it to another work of mine entitled

الدين مذكرة -

Manazarutul Advan,* "Discussion of Various Religions". In order to avoid any future change in this book by copyists, I have got this few pages printed just after composition. Let it be known that pronouncing words of benediction on prophets as done in this book is merely an imitation of the custom of the authors of Arab and Ajam.

* Monazara is a work in the form of a dialogue in which two or more persons are introduced to discuss a given special subject.



