Chapter - III

A DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF
RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY’S PERSIAN WORKS

Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin

Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin is an important work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The author in this work has analysed a number of aspects of Tawhid. He had not only explained them but has also commented upon the theories of the earlier writers who have attempted to analyse this subject.

Since it is a work dealing with a basic problem in all religions, it has been written in an strictly scientific manner. A number of religious terms, phrases and words have made the work altogether difficult to understand by those who are not conversant with them. Most of the terms used by the author are Islamic or more strictly Islamic Fitur which show the understanding of Islamic terms. The manner in which the author has explained and analysed these terms led a reader to believe that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was well versed in Islamic theology and so was able to explain them in a satisfactory manner.
Considering the importance of Tuhfatul Muwahhidin as the most important work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Persian it is therefore being discussed in detail

While being in Murshidabad in 1804 Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin (A Gift to Monotheists) in Persian with an introduction in Arabic. Bengali had not yet become the language of intellectual discourse. Another tract, Jawab-e-Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin (1820), defending Tufat against criticism by Zoroastrians, is falsely attributed to Ram Mohan.¹ He was to use Persian only once again, briefly, in 1822-23, as the founder of and editor of the weekly Miral-ul-Akhbar (Mirror of news). The importance of the earliest tract lies only its being the first known theological statement of one who achieved later fame and notoriety as a vendantin. On its own it is unremarkable, perhaps of interest only to a social historian because of its amateurish eclecticism. Tuhfat was, after all, available as early as 1884 in the English translation of Maulavi Obaidullah El Obaid, Published by the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Raja Ram Mohan Roy did not knew the Upanishad at this stage in his intellectual development. He was a babu, not yet the scholar. “His main source seems to be a Persian work, Dabistan-e-Mazabib or school of Religions, composed in 1645”.²

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¹ Quoted in Bruce Carlisle Robertson, Ram Mohan Roy, The father of Modern India (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995), p. 25.
² Quoted in S. Crawford Cromwell Ram Mohan Roy, His era and Ethics (Arnold Heinemann Publishers, India, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1984), p. 11.
Other commonly known religious works, for example Dabistan-e-Mazahib (AH, 1055, AD 1645), a well known Muslim work on North Indian religions.³

In Tuhfat, i.e., in 1804, Raja Ram Mohan Roy tells the reader that his "personal religion was an eclectic mixture of religious ideas"⁴ which he had discovered in the rich intellectual culture of his homeland. Untutored, his personal religion was indeed a latitudinarian composite of popular belief systems available to everyone in the popular culture of his day, i.e., Christian, sufi, Sunni Islam, bhakti cult, and vaisnava doctrines thrown together with the teaching of such medieval north Indian saints as Guru Nanak, Dadu and Kabir. Tuhfat contains theological ideas which for centuries have been common to many religious sects, not only in India but throughout Europe as well. For example, it rejects idolatry. Raja Ram Mohan Roy indicts religious leaders for the fraudulent commercialization of established religion, and for the consequent demoralization of society. He supports reasonable religion, his for egalitarianism in religion.

Some writers have tried to argue from Tuhfat that Raja Ram Mohan Roy's education and therefore "his orientation was fundamentally Islamic".⁵

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³ Ibid., p. 25.
⁵ Ibid., p. 26.
They draw attention to the style of argumentation in this, his first known theological statement. Abid U. Ghazi writes; “Roy’s writing is clearly that of a Madarsa stylist, naturally fluent in the use of Arabic technical, and Literary vocabulary acceptable in Persian. He uses Persian couplets, Quranic verses, and Arabic and Persian idioms to embellish his expression. Such could be acquired over years of study training and acquaintance with all aspects of Muslim culture”.6

Later he adds: “He uses the entire armoury of Islamic logic to support his ideas, which themselves ultimately turned against the tenet of all established religions, especially Islam”.7 R. C. Zaehner does not share Ghazi’s high opinion of Ram Mohan’s style”.8 According to him, the author of Tuhfat gives the impression of trying out newly acquired linguistic skills. Zaehner cites he use of Arabic words phrases without regard for their altered relationship within the context of Persian. The effect is that of an in polished essay full of “grammatical and syntactical oddities”.9 Zaehner and Ghazi, however, agree an the content of tract: there is no dispute that it attacked all established religious leadership and advocated natural religion.

From here on, begins a short synopsis underscoring his background in socio-political field ‘and his distinct indoctrination of

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7 Ibid., p. 26.
views on traits of various religions and his experiments with monotheism.

In the introduction he pointed out the universal unity of thought among mankind regarding the existence of One Being, and refused to give peculiar attributes to that Being. Raja Ram Mohan Roy condemned the narrowness of the sectarians in his Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin and emphasised that it is a natural tendency in human being and common to all mankind to believe in the existence of One Being, who is the source of the creation and the governor of it. The inclination to a particular God or Gods and to some peculiar forms of worship or devotion is an exceptional quality grown through habit and training. All those sectarians, who confute the creeds of others by disagreeing with them and believing in sayings of their predecessors who also tended to commit sins and mistakes.

There are two controversies which come together in the former case: Which has been termed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. That is Giving preference without any reason, Either falsehood is to be placed on a certain religion which is particular or common to all, in later case.10

In this treatise Raja Ram Moan Roy dealt with the question of logical and reasonable approach to religions and religious experience. And said that happiness prevails for those who make distinction between

conditions that are responsible for frequent association found in individual's characters that are the results of the robust desires found, in species and individuals.

And also on those who attempt to make an inquiry into the truth and falsehood of different ethics of religions nourished by different peoples. The people who lost sight of conscience to make the distinction between a real virtue and an actual sin simply because of their adherence to those religions conceptualised for the sake of protracting their names and getting honour. By holding a firm belief in their spiritual leaders. They always devote their valuable time to reading false stories and so called legends which are full of impossibilities. ( مستبعد العقل ) And such impossibilities lead those people to restore their faith in their past religious practices and the present patrons.¹¹

If any of them is making the enquiries about the truth, is considered to be a result of satanic temptation and cause of destruction to him in this world as well as in the next. For a man who adopted a particular religion with such firmness, after reaching the age of maturity with acquired knowledge of books, is insufficient to discover the real truth. Some times the same person, in order to attain the honour of being a Mujtahid or religious expounder, becomes anxious to invent new arguments by the help of his own knowledge truth and intellect, to strengthen the doctrines of his faith. The Muqallids or common people

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following that religion by blind invitation, point out the faults of the religion of others. The charismatic leaders work upon the followers to the extent that some people consider some stones and vegetables or animals are the real objects to be worshiped. The Mujtahids or religious profounders try to invent passages from untruth and the true propositions from the fallacious ones, and he will turn to the One Being who is the fountain of the harmonious organisation of the universe, and will pay attention to the good of the society. It is a belief of the followers of certain religions that mankind is created by the Creator for discharging the duties for the welfare of the present and future life by following tenets of that religion, and those who differ are liable to punishment and torments in the future life. All those living here are equally enjoying the eternal blessing of nature as lights of stars, pleasure of the season of spring, the full of rain, health of body, external and internal good, and other enjoyments of life, as well as equally suffering from inconveniences and pairs, as gloominess of darkness and severity of cold and mental diseases and narrowness of circumstances and outward and inward evils, without any distinctions in being follower of particular religion.

Each individual has an innate faculty in him by with he can concludes that there exists a 'Being' who governs the whole universe and each one adopts certain tenets practicing particular creed, for example, some of them believe in God qualified with human attributes; in the form of reasonable arguments in support of those articles of faith
and they try to strengthen the faith of the common people who are deprived of insight, discretion and disposition.

As humankind are naturally social beings as they are compelled themselves to live together socially, and as society depends upon individuals' understanding, the ideas of each other reciprocally and in existence of some rules that forms the basis of the invention of religion and upon that organisation of society depends. The belief in the existence of the next world, hundreds of potential hardships and privation regarding eating and drinking, purity and impurity, an auspiciousness and inauspiciousness etc., are added to social life and that are the services of trouble and bewilderment to the people. He stressed the necessity of a comparative study of religions and drew attention to the achievement of monotheism through out the world.

'There is always an innate faculty existing in the nature of mankind; that makes an enquiry into the nature of the principles of religious doctrines and with a sense of justice, there is a strong hope that he will be able to distinguish the truth. Others may believe in a Being comprehending and extending all over nature; a few may be inclined to a theism or thanking 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 object of worship.

There are persons not making any distinction between beliefs and an absolute belief in the existence of the source of the creation.
Blind belief and the inability to make enquiry into the sequence between the cause and the effect are responsible for the existence of superstitions and ignorance. As Raja Ram Mohan Roy put it in: '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 worshiping a tree or being a monk and purchasing for grievances of their crime from the high priests, etc, so be the cause of salvation and the purification from sins of a whole life' These objects don't have any miracle or produce any effects, had there been any real effect of these imaginary things, it must have been confined to one particular nation belief and habits'.

The idea of supernatural acts or miracles made by the founders of religion for attributing origin of a particular religion and increasing belief of common people in them. Raja Ram Mohan Roy rejected the dogmas of the supernatural power or miracle. The whole world is connected in the name of cause and effect, and certain causes and conditions make the existence of everything. People are attracted to particular person when he claims that his supernatural as sole responsible for his achievement. Belief in supernatural and miraculous reached such a degree in India that when people find wonderful things, they ascribe it to their gone-heroes or existence of its cause. But it is not hidden to those who have a sound mind. In some instances, the cause of some wonder full things remains unknown to some people. Here we ought to put the following query i.e., is it our own inability or
some impossible agency inconsistent with the law of nature? Without knowing the dependence of each other people don't believe that the one is the cause and the other the effect and also they do not hesitate to call one the cause and the other the effect, not with standing there is no connection between the two, for example the effect duas (دعاء) for the removal of calamity or effects of certain charms for getting recovery from disease. In the affairs of religion and faith, reason and its arguments have nothing to do because they are dependent upon faith and 'Divine Help'. People some time argue on the impossibility of the Omnipotent creator to unite life with the bodies of the dead a second time or give earthly bodies, the property of light or the power of air to travel at a great distance within short time.12

If their arguments were held to be true, then there would be no way for (منح) Mana or questioning the truth of a promise in syllogism, during (مناقشة) Munazra or discussion. If any one makes an attempt to prove impossible things might have recourse to such proposition at the time of discussion, and thus there would be no difference between the ideas of ܠܫܢܐ possible and impossible consequently the whole foundation of composition of syllogism and logically demonstrates would fall on the ground. The creator has no power to create impossible things, for example (شراكة) co-partnership with God or non-

12 Ibid., p. 11.
existence of God or existence of two contradictories, etc. Knowledge gathered by external senses are unable to prove the super human powers of the by gone leaders, and therefore it is necessary for doctors of different persuasions, to rely on the faith of their followers while have made the idea of Tawatur (تواتر) a means of proving such things. With a little consideration of the true idea of Tawatur.\footnote{Ibid., p. 13.}

Tawatur which produces positive belief, is assumed by the followers of religion that Tawatur is report coming down from a certain class of people to whose falsehood of that report cannot be imputed. But it is quite doubtful and obscure that such a certain people existed in ancient time. To prove the statement of the first class it is necessary to consider the statement of their contemporary and also to prove the statement of the next class or second class, the statement of the third class is necessary. Taking for granted the truth of the each party, there would be a preference to any one without any ground of preference. The reason is that each party can believe on the statement of their ancestors. The narratives regarding the by-gone kings’ ascendance to the throne and fighting with common enemies are reliable and unanimously agreed upon, in contrast, narratives of those supernatural works are contradicted and wonderful, for instance, the birth of individuals from their parents is a visible thing but birth of children without parents is quite contrary to reason.
In addition, the fact of geneology and the narratives of the by-gone kings are suppositions (......) and belief, especially positive propositions so that one cannot bear analogy to the other. When any difference arises in the history of any by-gone kings in the matter of descent or geneology, the reports about them are kept away from reliance. For example, the report about Alexander the Great's conquering China and the account about his birth which are not believed with certainty. The argument that the Almighty Creator has opened the way of guidance to mortal beings through the medium of prophets or leaders of religions is futile because of the belief in the existence of all things in the creation are connected with the Great Creator without any intermediate agency.\textsuperscript{14}

Sending of prophets and revelation to them from God, or immediately from God or through intermediate agency? There is no necessity of an intermediate agency, in the first case and services of intermediate agencies in the second case. So that the advent of prophets and revelation depend upon the invention of an inventor. The points put by some of the followers argue that discrepancy in precepts of different religion does not prove falsehood of any religion. These discrepancies are found to be the same nature as is found in laws of ancient and modern rulers of the world, as laws are framed according to different state of society, all these forms of religions, also were

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 15.
framed by God according to different states of society in different times. The authors' reply is that the ruling or government of the true God is identified with the particular state of every particle. He is Omniscient and to whom the past, present and the future times are equally known and under whose influence hearts of mankind can be turned into whatever he wishes. He is the provider of visible and invisible cases of everything and far from any particular object for his own interest. He has no whims and is not having any analogy with human beings whose wisdom is effective and incapable of understanding the end of every action and who are liable to commit errors and mistakes and also their actions are mixed with selfishness, deceit and hypocrisy.

Is there any analogy between two kings who differ in essential qualification? Subjecting the Brāmins to many troubles and persecutions by the followers of Islam is another instance for holding strong objections, According to the purport of the holy verse of the Quran:

فاقتلوا المعشرين حيث وجدتموه

وفسدوا الوثائق فاما منا بعد وامنادا
That killing idolaters and persecuting them in every case are obligatory by Divine command. According to the Muslim belief, the Brahmins are the inherent idolators and there fore the followers of the Islam have not failed to do their almost the kill and persecute the polytheists and unbelievers in the prophetic missions of the Seal of prophets and blessing to the present and future worlds.\textsuperscript{15}

There are two sayings, that is to attribute the reinjunctions and precepts to God or to reject these contradictory traditions at once, are in fact, 

or precepts of law that they will be subject to repeal. In holding one to be true the falsehood of the other must follow, while the probability of change or incoherence is equally applicable to both. The doctor of different religions believe that their religions give information about future reward or punishment after death which is either true or false. If it is false, there be no future reward or punishment, there is no harm in believing it to be true. But there is a great danger for the unbelievers, if its being true. The poor people who follow these exponents are always boasting of it. The habit and trainning make the mankind blind and deaf even after having eyes and ear. Because, firstly to consider the second case, there is no harm in believing it to be true, is not to be admitted. And secondly, having faith in those things, it may be the source of various mischiefs and troubles and immoral practices owing to gross ignorance and want of

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 17.
experience. Hence man has the confusion to believe all religions to be true and adopt the one or reject the others. Another argument by the doctors of religion laims the necessity of ceremonies and creeds adopted by our forefathers without any enquiry into the truth and falsehood of them. To hate those ceremonies and creeds or deviate from them, leads to disgrace in the present world and to mischief in the next and such a conduct is in fact an insult to our forefathers. It is applicable to those who have been founder of some religions and to these who have deviated from the old way of their forefathers and tried to pull down foundation of their ancestors creeds. Conversion from one religion to another of mankind which was common amongst the ancient people. Each individual of mankind should exercise his own intellectual power with the help of acquired knowledge to ascertain good from bad to make one of the valuable divine gift.16

Sometimes, the followers of different religions are on the side of the majority. The important thing to be noted is that the truth of saying doesn’t depend upon the multiplicity of the sayers. It is admitted that the truth is to be followed although it is against the majority of the people.

The lack of the number of the sayers leads to the invalidity of a saying because every religion had a very few supporters in its beginning. 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.

16 Ibid., 18.
A brief summary of the Tuhfat's doctrines. For classes of human beings are identified. First are those deceivers who will fully invent doctrines. Second are those who are unwittingly deceived. The third group are both deceivers and deceived. Lastly, there are those who are neither deceived nor who deceive.\(^{18}\) Raja Ram Mohan Roy placed religions leaders in the first category. Without them there would be no established traditions (tawatur) which could be used to force upon the solitary believer what it is impossible to accept rationally.\(^{20}\)

Zaehner's translation reads:

The Brahmans think their own revelation in Sanskrit is eternal and will last forever; no amount of persecution by the Muslims (nor referred to by name – Zaehner's note) had made them change their minds. Their persecution cannot proceed from a merciful God but from deceitful men. Moreover no one is agreed on who was the 'Seal of the prophets': some think he was from he seed of David. 'Distortion' is possible in both traditions, Nanak and others have made the same claim in India. Religious leaders will always find adherents prepared to

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 21.
\(^{18}\) Bruce Carlisle Robertson, Ram Mohan Roy: The father of Modern India (Oxford University Press, Delhi 1995), p. 27.
\(^{20}\) Bruce Carlisle Robertson, Opcit., p. 27.
endure hardships, fast, etc., for them, and believe what they teach. Reason cannot accept blind faith, and the acceptance of any faith only leads to fanaticism. 21

Four: neither deceiver nor deceived by the help of Almighty God.

These few sentences have been written without any regard to men of prejudice and bigotry, having a hope that people of sound mind will look to this with a view of justice. Tuhfat ul Muwahhidin of Raja Ram Mohan Roy is a unique work of its kind ever written in Persian. In Persian a great number of works have been written about various aspects of Islam, and Hinduism. Most of those works are meant to analyse these works and hardly any one of them certain such material which can be termed as harsh and serious criticism of religion. There is, most probably, only one book Dabistan-e-Mazahid in which a comparative study of almost all the big religious has been carried out. But in this work who, the author hardly takes notice of weak points of traditions of a religion. Contrary to these works, Tulfat-ul-Muwahhidin is actually a harsh appraisal of Islam and Hinduism. Raja Ram Mohan Roy in his pursuit to reform the Indian society in general and Hindu society in particular, has highlighted such aspect of both Islam and Hinduism which, as he thought, needed reforms. It should be maintained here that orthodox sections both in Muslims and Hindus will certainly not approve his criticism of their religions. Since the author had initiated reformist movement in India, he criticised all such aspect

21 Ibid., p. 28.
of Islam and Hinduism which did not suit his views for reforming the India society. 

Since Raja Ram Mohan Roy was sincere in his endeavours, so he was successful to a great extent in his objective. He attracted a number of Hindus to his movement and ultimately Brahmo Samaj came into being which has grown gradually an at present the number of the followers of Raja Ram Mohan Ray has grown up to a large extent. 

What Raja Ram Mohan Roy has conveyed in his Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin about the age old traditions of Hinduism required a great courage. Ignoring the expected reaction from the Hindu society, he came out in the most harsh words against the idol worship. Raja Ram Mohan Roy did it successfully in the previous century though it is not an easy task to undertake even at present. A perusal of this work shows the great determination of the author and actually speaking, his thorough knowledge of Hindu religion. Only a person can write a book like Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin who is well versed in both the Islamic sciences and the ancient Hindu religion. 

It is interesting to note that Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote this work in Persian. As the contents and the aim of the author by composing this work are concerned, the author composed this work for the general public who were to be reformed religiously. Raja Ram Mohan Roy by writing this work in Persian has proved that Persian even in his times the middle of 19th century – was understood by a good number of Indian. Though it had lost its past glory yet books meant of general public were written in Persian.
While dealing with some aspect of Islam and Hinduism, the author is very Technical and such portions in this book can be appreciated only by the scholars of both the religions. Use of a number of technical words for a number of Islamic sciences by the author in this work shows that he had seriously studied Islam and on the bases of his good knowledge of Islam has ventured to criticize and appreciate some of its aspects.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's style of argumentation is logical. We may not agree with some of his conclusions, but the fact can not be denied that he is successful in his own way in defending his view points. His forceful defence of his thinking shows that he believed firmly in his convictions.

The contents of this book clearly exhibited that the author was preparing a ground for a movement in near future. And the same happened.

The language of Tufat-ul-Muwahhidin is not simple. The use of religious terms has added to its difficult style and expression. However, it remains a fact that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a scholar of Persian and knew well how to express himself in this language. The author has quoted some verses from great Persia poets in support of him expressions in Persian. It again shows that he was well versed in Persian literature and was in a position to take advantage of great Persian literary traditions in his works.
Another important point to be noted in Tuhfat-ul-Muwhhidin is the deep study of the contemporary Indian society by the author. The exploitation of people by certain religious groups is correctly depicted in Tufat-ul-Muhhidin. How these so called groups of religious person were taking undue advantage of the general public in religious affairs. Such discussion in the book portrays the contemporary ignorance of people towards religion. Obviously the same state of affairs prompted the author to express himself against in harsh language.

One may or may not agree with certain interpretations of the religions beliefs and traditions by the author, but it is effect that Tulfat-ul-Muwahhidin is an important and authentic source for the study of the Indian society in general during the nineteenth century of Christian era.

In view of its importance and relevance Tulfut-ul-Muwahhidin was translated into Urdu and commented upon in English for the benefit of those who were ignorant of Persian in which it was originally written. The author left the details of it to another work of his entitled "Manazartul adiyan" (Discusson of various religions) this work is being carried out merely as an imitation of the custom of the authors of Arab and Ajam. Though no trace of this has been found.22

The modern press in India is a British "transplantation". Starting is eventful carrier with Bengal Gazette more popularly known as Hickey's Gazette (1780). Hickey was the first man to realized the value of "news" it remained for about the next forty years an exclusive affair of the British colony in India. This was the first Indian owned news paper in English and was edited by Gangadhar Bhattacharya, a school master and a devoted follower of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Hickey was neither a lecturer, nor a journalist. He believed in presenting sensational news, repugnant sarcasm, petty gossip and juicy scandals. The remarkable quality of this adventure was that he had a boundless love for personal freedom. A free citizen he wanted full independence to express himself in black & white and not in vague grey lines. "what courage and what audacity" remarked the officials. But was this style of reporting very different from today's journalistic pursuits including the daily news bulletin? But those days were days of repression. The newspaper were supposed to boost up only the Government. James Augustus Hickey was "no St. Francis of Assisi, but as far as persecution in the world of journalism was concerned, he was under

24 Jamuna Nag, Raja Ram Mohan Roy: India's great social reformer (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, Jullundar, 1972), p. 84.
25 Ibid., p. 84.
fire" supressed by the Government, Hickey remarked, "I have no propensity, I was not bred to a slavish life of hard work. At I take a pleasure in enslaving my body order to purchase freedom for my mind and sole". He beseeched the company government to be courteous, but he refused all offers of bribes, open or secret. Although Hickey was physically crused he sole remained free. Incidently the East India Company faced criticisms of the top officials since their private and public lives were discussed freely in the news paper.

Hastings and Clive were not spared. Hickey's Gazette use to have a dig at Hastings frequently, specially when it discussed Hastings' private life. Hickey's Gazatte was a politico-commercial weekly, but soon it fell from official estimation and ceased publication. Later the proprietor was penalised and jailed. Ultimately he died, but his sprit remains immortal to this day. The first man who spoke about the freedom of the press was Hickey. His style of reporting was appreciated by the British officials and also inspired by the entire realm of journalists long after he disappeared from India. The country was surpressed under the company Government's exploitation. The press was very much under repression an losing all its prestige. William Duane, an American of Irish descent started world in 1794. He was arrested and deported in 1795. Several cases of deportation and arrest of additions created a terror amongst the press men. Inspite of such feeling of insecurity and

26 Ibid., p. 84.
27 Ibid., p. 84.
terror, it was very difficult to run a newspaper. In fact, people were hungry for news. By relinquishing indiscriminate criticism of the government, editors and proprietors were started no of weeklies and newspapers such as India Gazette, Bengal Journal, Oriental Magazine and Indian World. Between 1791-98 several editors were warned, punished and persecuted in various ways. Maclean who started 'Bengal Harkara' came into conflict with the government and was arrested, later reported to England. "Lord Wellesley tried to solve the problems by introducing censorship in Bengal in 1799 by laying down several conditions for publications:

1. Every printer of a newspaper to print his name at the bottom of the paper.

2. Every editor and proprietor of a paper to deliver in his name and place of abode to the secretary to the Government.

3. No paper to be published on Sunday.

4. No newspaper to be published at all until it shall have been previously inspected by the secretary to the Government or by person authorized by him for that purpose.

5. The penalty for offending against any of above regulations to be immediate embarkation for Europe.
Lord Wellesly denied to the Baptist Mission right to start a press in Calcutta, but they later open one in serampore. The company government continued to regard editors and proprietors of news paper dangerous agent. “Lord Minto from 1811 put more restrictions”.28

Dr. James Bryce acquired the Asiatic Journalism 1814 and became the editor. Heatley published the 'Morning post' in Calcutta. But despite all repressive measures the press in Bengal could not put into a "strate-Jacket".29 “On May 13, 1799 certain regulations were promulgated for the control and guidance of the proprietors of news papers published in Calcutta”.30 No paper was to be published on Sunday and every paper was to be issued only after the previous inspection of the secretary to the Government of India.

The following papers filed the declarations and expressed submission to the Regulations of 1799. The papers were :- The Calcutta courier, (Proprietors Thomas Hollingberg & Robert Khellen), The Asiatic Mirror (Editor Charles K. Bruce), The Oriental star (Editor Richard Fleming), The Telegraph (editor Holt Mackenley), The Bengal Harkaru (Editor William Hunter), The morning post (Editor Archibald Thomson paul ferris and Morley Green way) etc. Another press regulation of 1800, made security deposits compulsory so that government could realized axcess expenses on postage of the papers. This strict censorship was

28 Ibid. p. 88.
29 Ibid. p. 88.
30 Dr. M. C. Kotnala, Raja Ram Mohan Roy & Indian Awakening (Gitanjali Prakashan, New Delhi 1975), p. 39.
due to some political reason. The Maratha, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, the French revolutionary ideas were dreaded more than anything else. Reminder were dispatched again and again restraining the proprietors from publishing objectionable matter.

This state continued up to 1807 when Lord Minto took over as the Governor General of India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy came to Calcutta in 1815. Till he came upon newspaper were run mostly by European Missionaries, when journalism was still a painful enterprise with more restrictions and competent journalist did want to join this profession.

"But the Problem of press Raja Ram Mohan Roy was perhaps his strongest passion."31 Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a pioneer in Indian Journalism. He had a "high notion of personal dignity"32 In 1816 the first weekly paper was started The Bengal Gazette, Raja Ram Mohan Roy published his first tract against Sati in the Bengal Gazette. And was started by a Bengali gentleman named Gangadhar Bhattacharya. It was first newspaper started by any Indian. The missionaries of Europe started there first monthly magazine 'Digdarshan'. They also started publication of a Bengali weekly 'Samachar Darpan'. Dr. J.C. Marshman was the editor of the paper. It lasted up to 1841. The missionary also published another English journal called 'The friend of India'. John Burton and James Mackenzie were the first to start a Sunday newspaper called Guardian.

32 Ibid. p. 100.
Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a man of dignity and pride. He would not submit to humiliating restraints which editor and proprietors of newspaper were expected to suffer silently. Although he resented Governmental control, he was not unaware of the fact that most editors lacked propriety. The attitude of the British Administrators became less progressive with the numerous political changes taking place in European politics as well as the expansion of the British Power in India. Lord Hastings was contemplating on liberating the press to some extent. He even suggested some editors need not submit each copy before publication for the approval of the Government. Except the Asiatic Journal which gave an unconditional support to the interest of the company, editors felt hardly confident to publish their views frankly. Nevertheless, the press was partially liberated as the censorship and precensorship were no longer demanded. The atmosphere thus created gave fresh enthusiasm to start liberal press. James Silk Buckingham "one of the formative forces of public opinion in India and the most courageous of early editors"[^33], was a great enterpriser. James Silk Buckingham arrived in India in 1818. He played a major role in the struggle for the freedom of press. To prominent figure who captured the journalistic world were Buckingham and Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Buckingham published prospectus of the newspapers, entitled "Calcutta Journal" on Friday October 2, 1818. It discussed matters considering the life and progress of the local people. Raja Mohan Roy was a strong supporter of

[^33]: Ibid. p. 101.
the Calcutta Journal and gave it full moral support. Buckingham supported and encouraged to every movement of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Tory press started anti campaign against the Calcutta Journal. The Bengal Harkaru the Asiatic Mirror were all against the Calcutta Journal. John Bull, its rival, started in 1821, took up a hostile attitude towards the Calcutta Journal. On 12 February 1823 an order was served on Buckingham cancelling his licence to reside in India from 15 April 1823. Buckingham started the Oriental Herald in England, and "through his editorials exposed the numerous misdeed of the company's rule in India".34

During stay in Indian Buckingham was fully associated with Raja Ram Mohan Roy because of his admiration for his liberal views and erudition. Both Buckingham and Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought for the freedom of the press. And also having popularity in the field of journalism the Governor journal of Indian Lord Hastings believed in a free press. But after leaving of Lord Hastings from India in 1823 the acting Governor General

Promulgated an ordinance which required the editors and proprietors to take out licenses from the Government. Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed in a free press. He took the initiative in filing a memorial in the supreme court against the ordnance. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's memorial to

34 Ibid., p. 91.
supreme court and appeal to the king-in-council regarding freedom of press are regarded as: "The Arcopagitica of Indian History".35

"Like Milton, he drew upon History as well as on the board principals of political science to so what the press is a beneficial to the governed as to the Government. Like Milton he showed that what ever was o the highest excellence in Government, or of the greatest virtue and enlightenment in society could be secured only by the freedom of the press".36 But Milton raised his voice for the freedom of mind itself, because he had to contend against the lincensing of all kinds of publication. And Raja Ram Mohan Roy's support was mainly for the periodical pulication, because the Bengal government regulation of 1823 aimed at restricting not all kinds of publications, but only the periodical press. Till 1828 Raja Ram Mohan Roy associated with missionary press. But gradually he started his own paper in Bengali named 'The Sambad Kaumudi or the Moon of intelligence. It published on December 4, 1821. It was the first Indian news paper edited, published, and managed by the Indian. "It was need to be the carrier of enlightenment and culture –political, social and literary awareness".37 The Calcutta Journal also wrote in appreciation of the Sambad Kaumudi on 31, January 1822.

36 Ibid. p. 88.
37 Ibid. p. 92.
Mirat-ul-Akhbar

The nineteenth century brought about a significance event in the history of Indian journalism. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the founder of the nationalist press in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a progressive thinker and great social reformer of East. For all his social, religious, educational and political reforms he needed the services of the liberal press. "He was certainly not the man to overlook the enormous value of the newspaper as an instrument for diffusing intellectual light". Persian was still court language in Bengal and regarded as the language of the elite of the society (both the Hindus and the Muslims). Raja Ram Mohan Roy thought that it was the Persian, through which the Muslim intelligentsia could be approached and moved. On April 12, 1822 he started a weekly paper in Persian named Mirat-ul-Akhbar (Mirror of News). He wanted to spread scientific, literary and political knowledge among the people. Mirat contained articles not only an International problems such as the Irish discontent, the national aspirations of Greeks. Mirat-ul-Akhbar was the first Persian newspaper in India. Its first issue came out on April 12, 1822.

The prospectus stated: "Thanks be to God, that in these days the inhabitants of Calcutta enjoy under the Government of the English nation, that freedom and security which is considered by rational and

\[38\] Quoted in Dr. M. C. Kotnala, Raja Ram Mohan Roy & Indian Awakening (Gitanjali Prakashan, New Delhi, 1975), p. 98.
social beings as the grand object of all civil and religious institutions. Every Persian is entitled to express his own sentinents, and give an account of the conduct of others in such a manner as not to be injurious to them. Under these circumstances, some gentlemen of the nation publish in English language, the news of this and other countries, for the improvement of the public at large, and those acquainted with that language profit generally by these papers, receiving intelligence from all quarters, not withstanding their particular local situation. But as the English language is not understood in all parts of India, those unacquainted which must either have recourse to others in their enquiries after information or remain to tally uninformed. On this account I, the humblest of the human race, am desirous of publishing a weekly News paper, written in Persian language, which is understood by all the respectable part of the Native commonly and am ready to distribute it to all who may be so inclined.

I solemnly protest that it is not my object to make this paper the channel of exaggerated precise to the great, or to my own friends, that I may haveby meet with favour and promotion: nor is it my intention in this editorial capacity to permit un merited blame or................. others. On the contrary, I shall have regard for truth and for the rank of persons in authority, and in composing every sentence, keeping in view the saying of the poet, that "The wounds of the spear may be healed, but a wound inflicted by the tounge is inurable" – I shall guard against any expression that might tend to hurt the feelings of any individual. In
short, in taking upar myself to edit this paper, my only object is that
may lay before the public such articles of intelligence may increase the
knowledge and tend to their social improvement, and that to extend my
abilities I may communicate to the rulers a knowledge of the real
situation of their subject and make the subjects acquainted with the
established laws and customs of their rulers "that the rulers may the
move readily find an opportunity of granting relief to the people, and
people may be put in possession of the means of obtaining protection
and redress from their rulers".39

The general standard of writing in Mirat-ul-Akhbar was of a high
order and they set indeed a very high standard of journalism. In this
way, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first in the field of Persian
journalism in Calcutta.

This Persian paper was published on Fridays. The Mirat-ul-Akhbar
from the very the beginning possessed somewhat higher intellectual
gravity. The editorials were written by Raja Ram Mohan Roy himself
and concentrated an important social political religious, ethical
problems. International affair were discussed elaborately. His bold
editorials, which set up the strong point of Mirat-ul-Akhbar and
enhanced its prestige. "They show a wide range of knowledge,
courageous exposition of views, pride in the ancient culture and

philosophy of India and keen enthusiasm to reform Indian society". They were much ahead of his age and prove to what good use a capable hand could put the press. His ironical remark and polemical powers broker the adversary's arguments in to pieces. The character and policy of the paper can be understood from the contents of the first number of the Mirat-ul-Akhbar, given as below:

1. The editorial note in which the editor informing the public that although so many newspaper have been published in Calcutta there was none in Persian for the benefit of those who did not understand English particular by in upper Hindustan.

2. Government regulation respecting the period of absence which the servants of the company could avail themselves of an account of their health.

3. Difference with China.


5. Release of Prisoners an the Kings Birth day (23rd April).

6. Cause of enmity between Russia and the subline porte.

7. Exploits of Ranjit Singh.

8. Shipping intelligence.

\[40\] Ibid, p. 15.
From the above mentioned contents, it is evident that Raja Ram Mohan Roy wanted to make the paper interesting and comprehensive.

The Calcutta journal summarised the first twenty-six issues of the Mirat-ul-Akhbar. They provide us “an excellent documentary picture of the life in Calcutta, of manners, habits, pleasures and even perversities of its citizens during the twentieth of the last century.” Mirat published articles on literary, historical, scientific and religious subjects. Raja Ram Mohan Roy extorted his countrymen to give up age-long traditions, customs and taboos, and desired, that they should develop a new social consciousness but at the same time they should enrich themselves with “modern teachings” in science and arts. Some time the Mirat-ul-Akhbar through its editorial championed unpopular causes. Such as the case of the John Hays. “He was the jude of Comilla and was tried for the murder of a notorious Hindu Zamidar Pratap Narayan Dass. There was much hatred and anger on both the sides but Hays as acquitted by the supreme court on accepting his plea that the land lord

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41 Ibid, p. 107.
42 Ibid, p. 108.
had died of Cholera and not of whipping. The Mirat-ut-Akhbar defended Hays, and requested the readers not to forget the atrocities committed by the Hindu Zamidar on the weak and helpless, but at the same time it condemned the rashness of Mr. Hayes."43 On another occasion the Mirat, come to defend Islam, through its editorial "Odes of Hafiz"44 some European gentle man charged the Muslims with fanatical intolerance. Raja Ram Mohan Roy expressed that "object of publishing the odes of Hafiz together with an English translation is that the European gentleman who accuses Muslims of religious intolerance and excessive rigours of their laws might know that in Muslim countries, Hafiz the author of these odes, not with standing his promulgating deitical verses, impregnated with sufi ide as and doctrines, which are at variance with their religious tenets, had never been persecuted and Muslims or by Muslims Magistrates".45 In its issue of October 11, 1822, the Mirat-ul-Akhbar Publishing an article on Ireland, the causes of its distress and discontents. And it also discussed the root causes of the discontentment of the Irish people.

The Greek war of independence was not favourably commented upon in the Mirat-ul-Akhbar But the fact remains that Raja Ram Mohan Roy expressed his views boldly and courageous, where he differed from the official. ofcourse the paper Pursued the policy of maintaining

43 Ibid, p, 108
44 Ibid, p, 108
good relations with government and Europeans. He wrote an article in his Persian Weekly Mirat-ul-Akhbar in April, 1822, on the principle of the English constitution. First of all he explained “The general objects of the' government that it was not concealed from national men, that in order to preserve men’s lives and properties from the attempts of their fellow citizens and to form friendly relations with neighbouring states and resist the aggressions of nations it was absolutely necessary that every nation should have some kind of Government”.

Mirat-ul-Akhbar was the first publication in India with a distinct nationalists and democratic progressive orientation. “This paper was mainly the organ of the propaganda of the social reform and a critical discussion of religious philosophical problems”. Raja Ram Mohan Roy found little support in running news papers although, according to the prevailing standard, circulation of his Mirat-ul-Akhbar was quite large. Bukingham wrote expansively, “none has created a more favourable expression. The Editor, we are informed, is a Brahmin of high race, a man of liberal sentiments, and by no means deficient in loyalty, well versed in the Persian language, and possessing a competent knowledge of English, intelligent with a considerable share of general information and an insatiable thirst after knowledge”.

In his Calcutta journal, however Bunkingham from time to time found space for extensive resumes of the contents of the Mirat-ul-akhbar. Therefore it is possible to form a fairly adequate opinion of the range and scope of their coverage and general editorial policy. Raja Ram Mohan Roy cast his net very wide and was able to furnish something to attract a variety of interest. The Mirat-ul-Akhbar, being aimed at a more cultivated public, possessed somewhat higher intellectual gravity. Mirat-ul-akhbar was to be published from Dharamtalla (Calcutta).

At all events, the article is of considerable historical interest in revealing at the very starting point of the nationalist movement in India a strand of sympathy and kinship with the Irish struggle. The writer of Mirat begins with a brief survey of the geography and political history of Ireland and refers to acts of British usurpation. The kings of England having shut their eyes against justices, the readers are told, gifted away to their own parasites the estates of Irish noble men. An even greater inequality was the exploitation of the differences of faith and the levying of the taxes on the Catholics to defray the expenses of the Established Church. And this points underlined by a quotation from Shaikh Sadi-

"Donot say these rapacious Ministers are the well-wishers of his Majesty,

for in proprotaion as they augment the revenues of the state,
they diminsh its popularity,

O statesmen, apply the revenue

of the king for the comfort of the people,

for that is the way to win their loyalty.49

In any case, the fact that Raja Ram Mohan Roy allowed it to appear implies his approval of the line taken by the leader writer. It was a line which could hardly be expected to enhance his popularity among his own community though it reflects great credit on his capacity for detachment and liberality of spirit.

On the October 10, 1822, a lengthy minute was read in the council chamber at Fort William by W.B. Baley analysing the trends of the Native Pres. Which he frankly declared he considered a source of serious mischief and capable of infinite evil. As supporting evidence for his argument he single out Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Persian weekly the Mirat-ul-Akhbar, for specially attention, presumably because he considered it to be the worst sinner, He quoted certain passage from what was, perhaps, a some what in felicitiously phrased obituary notice on the death of the Bishop Middleton who was believed to have once tried to convert Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Christianity by holding out promise of goodthings on earth and even better in the hereafter: "The editors known disposition for theological controversy had led him to

49 Ibid, p, 291.
seize an occasion for publishing remarks on the trinity, which although convertly and insidiously conveyed, strike me as being exceeding offensive. The circumstances in which the discussion originated was notice in the above paperl (the Mirat) on the subject of the death of Dr. Middleton, the late Bhispop of Calcutta. After some laudatory remarks on his learning and dignity, the article concludes by stating that the Bishop, having been now relieved from the care and anxieties of this world, had tumbled on the shoulders of the mercy of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost."

Baley, it is conceivable, was an ardent Trinitarian and as such genuinely scandalized by the faletious handling of a sacred them by the editor of the Mirat-ul-Akhbar.

But it is hard to believe that he was realy as shocked as he pretended to be by Raja Ram Mohan Roy's failure to show proper respect towards the persons of the Trinity. He went on to accuse the Mirat of circulating false and inendacious news. And as an example he quoted a report in the Mirat describing the visit of the Persian Prince to the Governor General which suggested that the latter had sent a battalion of European troops to escort the Prince to the government house where the visitor was received by his host at the head of the stairs.

"This exaggerated statement Bayley claimed has been published with design (and will doubtless have the effect) of spreading both in India

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50 Ibid, p, 297.
and Persia, extremely false notions of the nature of the attention shown
to the prince and of the importance attached to it by the government of
India.\textsuperscript{51} Raja Ram Mohan Roy's paper, in Bayley's estimation, had
sinned in other grievous ways not least by carrying on his campaign
against the Sati. The News of the arbitrary action was given in the
Mirat-ul-Akhbar.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy naturally took the lead in organising a
movement of protest against expulsion order on his friend Bunkingham
as well as against the ordinance. A protest was called for at this
arbitrary violation of civil liberties and Raja Ram Mohan Roy made the
protest. Raja Ram Mohan Roy closed down the publication of the
Persian weekly, Mirat-ul-Akhbar under protest against the press
regulation. In an editorial in the last issue of the Mirat-ul-Akhbar, Raja
Ram Mohan Roy grave his reasons why under the conditions created
by the new regulation he "The least of all the human race"\textsuperscript{52} had
decided regretfully an reluctantl to relinquish the publication of the
paper. He set down three main difficulties which had prompted him to
take the drastic step. The difficulties are these:

First, although it is very easy for those European gentleman who have
the honour to be acquainted with the chief secretary to Government to
obtain a license according to the prescribed from, yet Iobe humble

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, p, 298.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, p, 305.
individual like myself, it is very hard to make his way through the porters and attendants of a great personage, or to enter the doors of the police court, crowded with people of all classes, for the purpose of obtaining what is in fact, already in my own option, Because:

آپوری که بصدعون جگر رست و هد
بامید کرم خواجه به دربان مغروش

The respect which purchased with a hundred drops of hearts blood

Donot in the hope of a favour of the Master, commit to the mercy of a porter.

Secondly, to make Affidavit in an open court, in presence of respectable Magistrates, in looked upon as very mean and censurable by those who watch the conduct of their neighbours. Besides the publication of newspaper is not incumbent upon very person, so that he must resort to the evasion of establishing fictitious proprietors, which is contrary to law, and repugnant to conscience.

Thirdly, after incurring the disrepute of solicitation and suffering the dishonour of making Affidavit, the constant apprehension of the license being recalled by Government which would disgrace the person in the
eyes of the world, must create such anxiety as entirely to destroy his peace of mind. Because a man, by nature liable to err, in telling real truth cannot help some times making use of words and selecting phrases that might be unpleasant to Government. I however, here prefer silence to speaking out:

Princes know the secrets of their own policy Thou, O Hafiz, art a poor retired man, be silent.