CHAPTER VII

YOUNG BENGAL AND RELIGIOUS VIEWS AND REFORM
1. Young Bengal And Religious Polarity:

Shortly after the death of Derozio the breakage from his rationalist ideal came in no other way than the amenability of some of his disciples to Christian theological persuasions. Krishna Mohun Banerjea and Mohesh Chunder Ghose were converted into Christianity. It is noteworthy that Madhob Chunder Mullick embraced Christianity in 1833.\(^1\) Mohesh was baptized in the Old Mission Church (August, 1832) which gave great offence to the Presbyterians including Alexander Duff.\(^2\) Krishna Mohun Banerjea was converted into Christianity by Duff in October, 1832. Shortly after this conversion Krishna Mohun clearly revealed the influence of Duff's formula as to how the West might best regenerate India.

Does not history testify that Luther alone and unsupported blew a blast which shook the mansions of error and prejudice? Did not Knox, opposed as he was by bigots and fanatics, carry the cause of reformation into Scotland? ... Blessed are we that we are to reform the Hindu nation. ... We have attacked

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Hinduism and will persevere in attacking it until we finally seal our triumph.  

In 1833 Krishna Mohun, possibly under Duff's influence, published an attack upon the Vedatists or the Vedantism. He wrote that Rammohun had deluded us into believing in the divine origin of the Upanishads. He added: "Are not the Vedas saturated with idolatry?" His most serious challenge to Rammohun and the Vedantists was that monism and not monotheism was the culmination of the Vedic tradition and wisdom.

The God of the Vedanta ... is an infinite something but that something is neither a Creator nor a Moral Benefactor. He is not a Moral being at all and cannot therefore be regarded with moral feeling. We wonder at His immensity, and omnipotence and eternity, and invincibility, but we cannot thank or love or reverence Him, because there is nothing in His nature, or in His acts that is fitted to excite these feelings.

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3. The Enquirer cited in Duff, Alexander, India And India Missions, p. 628.
6. ibid, p. 4.
7. ibid, pp. 9 - 10.
Krishna Mohun was frankly amazed as to how Rammohun could choose the Vedic tradition as containing monotheism and morality on a par with Christian revelation. 8

Gobind Chunder Bysack (whose formal identity with the Brahma Samaj was not known) attacked Christianity in a series of articles in the Reformer, then owned by Prosunno Coomar Tagore, a follower of Rammohun Roy. These were replied to by Hon'ble Ross Donally Mangles in the pages of the Enquirer. 9

Yet Krishna Mohun went on his missionary work. In 1837 he joined the Christ Church of England to the great anger of Duff. But he was warm in his christian zeal instilled into his mind by Duff. As a Decon of the Christ Church he administered his first baptism on Jadunath Ghose. This was followed in 1838 by the baptism of his own brother, Kali Mohun Banerjea, in the Chapel of the Bishop's College. He converted his wife, Bindubasini, into Christianity in the teeth of the opposition of her parents. In February, 1839 he accompanied Archdeacon Dealtry and two other missionaries to Krishnagur for the purpose of baptizing 500 persons, who had been under Christian instruction. These people represented fifty two villages with a population of 3,000. 10

Krishna Mohan carried on propaganda in favour of Christianity. The Enquirer became a suitable vehicle of such

8. Ibid, p. 4.
propaganda. Krishna Mohun tried in many ways to remove misconceptions regarding Christianity among his countrymen. On every Sunday after 1837 he delivered a lecture on the sermons of the Bible in the lecture-hall of the Church of England. At the request of Archdeacon T. Dealtry he later published these sermons in the form of a book entitled Upadesh Katha (1840) in twelve sections. The work was undertaken with a view to satisfying an enquiring mind regarding Christianity.  

In order to combat the rise of Christianity Debendranath Tagore set up the Tattvabodhini Sabha in 1839 for the double purpose of spreading Vedantic theism and countering the rise of Christianity. Among those who assisted Debendranath in conducting the Sabha was Omrito Lall Mitra. Omrito Lall Mitra was the secretary to the library of the Tattvabodhini Sabha. Ramgopal Ghose was a secretary to the Tattvabodhini Sabha for three years (1844-1847).

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The Tattvabodhini Sabha set up the Tattvabodhini Pathsala on July 3, 1840 after the plan of the model Bengali pathsala founded by the Hindu College Committee at the initiative of Prosunno Coomar Tagore. It was to teach oriental and occidental learning and science through Bengali. It was also to impart instruction in the Hindu Shastras. Its object was to encourage the cultivation of Bengali among the English educated Youths and to combat the move of the Missionaries to spread Christian learning through gratuitous instructions in their schools. Akshay Kumar Dutt, the editor of the Tattvabodhini Patrika (August 26, 1843) for the first twelve years, served as a teacher of the school for sometime. Ramgopal Ghose and Tarachand Chuckerburtee took interest in the Pathsala. Among those, who were present on the occasion of the annual examination of the Pathsala at the village of Bansabati (Hugli district ?), were Tarachand and Ramgopal. Ramgopal distributed seventeen books among the students of the Pathsala during the examination in

18. The Friend of India, May 29, 1845.
19. The Tattvabodhini Pathsala was shifted from Calcutta to Bansabati on Baisakh 18, 1765 saka.
1766 Saka. Omrito Lall Mitra gave away seven books at that time.20

Meanwhile, Alexander Duff with Krishna Mohun Banerjee planned to launch an indirect attack on Brahmaism. Duff believed that Vedantic theism did not stand in comparison with the reasonable system of theology or Natural Theology. It was nothing but gross pantheism and lacked any moral attribute. Duff, therefore, decided to propagate the idea of pure theism without reference to any religious creed and established the Hindu-Thee-Philanthropic Society on February 10, 1843 in co-operation with Krishna Mohun Banerjea and some educated Hindus like Kissory Chand Mitra.21 The Society aimed at the extermination of Hindu idolatry and dissemination of sound and enlightened views of the Supreme Being, the unseen and future world and happiness and final beatitude. It proposed to teach the Hindus to worship God in spirit and truth, and to enforce those moral and most sacred duties, which they owed to the Maker, their fellow-creatures and to themselves.22 The truths which it meant to

inculcate were, it was contended, not necessarily dependent upon the truth or falsehood of any creed but such as were independent of all creeds and sanctioned by the universal belief of mankind. It stated the following ideas. i) There is a Creator or Moral Governor of the Universe, ii) There is something in man which is not annihilated on the dissolution of bodily frame and which is immortal, iii) Virtue is associated with happiness and vice with misery. It was claimed that these constituted the seminal principles of religion both of the civilized and the uncivilized nations. 23 The object of this Society, as its very name implied, was to promote love to God and love to man. 24 The Society held monthly meetings when discourses in English and Bengali were delivered. The subjects embraced by the discourses related to the general principles of morality and religion. The other means adopted by the Society for the realization of its objects were preparation and publication of Bengali tracts and reprinting of Sanskrit and Bengali works illustrating the same. 25 The object of the Society being a catholic one, it invited cordial sympathy of every enlightened and native friend of the country in its behalf.

The dogmas of the Hindu Theo-Philanthropist were, as Kissory Chand Mitra contended, "those upon which all sects,

23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
Christian, Hindu, Mahomedan and Chinese are agreed" and "the name they have taken of expresses the double end of all religionists, that of leading, namely, to love towards God and men." 26 The monthly meetings were attended and addressed by representative men of different views such as Duff, Krishna Mohun Banerjea, Akshay Kumar Dutt, Ramgopal Ghose and Peary Chand Mitra. 27

The Society sought to inculcate that man was endowed with moral and religious powers no less than with intellectual faculties. It stressed the need for the cultivation and development of intellectual as well as moral and religious nature of man. As noted before, it pointed out the absence of moral and religious instruction from the educational institutions under the control of the Education Council and raised a demand for the inclusion of such type of instruction for the proper fulfilment of true ends of education. 28 It deplored the pseudo-religious faith or the absence of religious faith among a number of English-educated youths. It contended that men without religious faith were more degraded than the superstitious countrymen since religion, however superstitious, imparted a motive to virtue. 29 While it stood for important political reforms like Indianization of higher services,

27. Ibid.
29. Ibid., pp. 269 - 270.
it held that political elevation alone, exclusive of intellectual, moral and religious elevation, could hardly regenerate Indian. 30 It observed:

India emancipated from her spiritual thraldom - India dismembered from the manacles of Brahmanical superstition, which consists in the worship of images and the multiplication of one invisible Godhead into thirty three hundreds of millions of parts, will rise spontaneously and clothe herself with the rights and privileges of civilization and freedom. 31

The volume of the proceedings of the Society consists in a series of essays partly in English and partly in Bengali. The Bengali essays treated of the powers and goodness of God and the delight of worshipping the Brahma, the supreme. 32

The English essays on "The Immortality Of The Soul", "Hinduism As It Is" and "the Bhagbat Gita" might go to the credit of Kissory Chand Mitra. Krishna Mohun Banerjee wrote two essays - One in reply to Kissory Chand Mitra on the Bhagbat Gita and another on conformity and non-conformity. 33

32. Ibid.
In the essay on the 'Immortality Of Soul' it was not only admitted but also proved by suitable quotations that the soul "is an emanation from the deity" and a "part and parcel of the universal spirit" - being "a portion of divine substance it (the soul) participates in the divine attributes, eternal and unborn, immortal and infinite" - and "salvation" or "mukti" is identification with the deity or absorption into his essence. 34 The editor of the Calcutta Review remarked in this connection: "What grieves us to find that a writer of such intelligence could propound this impious dogma not only without repudiating it but apparently consenting to it as true." 35

In the essay on 'Hinduism As It Is' there are very excellent and pertinent remarks respecting the evils of popular idolatry, intermixed however with confused and darkly observations. It was admitted that the Vedas "do countenance idolatry". But it was reluctantly admitted with sundry softenings and apologetic expressions. The idolatry inculcated by the Vedas was declared to be different in kind from the idolatry which then prevailed. It was "deification only of the elements" and so forth. 36 The editor of

35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
the Calcutta Review observed: "Talk of the extermination of idolatry, and in the same breath uphold the Vedas and Vedantism which tolerates or countenances idolatry. Is it not marvellous that the stark ... contradiction of such a course of procedure does not awaken our amiable and rational Theo-philanthropists out of their delusive dreams?" 37

The essay on the system of philosophy inculcated in the Bhagat Gita, the editor of the Calcutta Review remarked, also exhibited the same incongruous blending of light and darkness. 38 The Gita is said to aim at the extermination of idolatry. Yet it was allowed that "it compromises in some measure with the religious prejudices of our countrymen" by repeatedly declaring that "the temporary enjoyment of an inferior heaven is the reward of those that worship idols." Its views of God were said to be "peculiarly noble and elevated" and yet it was admitted that "it identifies, in some measure, the creator with the creature" and that it "savours of pantheism." 39

Krishna Mohun Banerjea exposed the inconsistencies of Kissory Chand Mitra's essay in his essay on the

37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
Bhagbat Gita. The editor of the Calcutta Review observed in this connection: "The Neo-Vedantist essayist having quoted, with marked approbation, Warren Hastings's famous panegyric on the Gita, the Christian essayist proceeds to analyse and expose it." It is, of course, difficult to prove that Kissory Chand Mitra was at the time a newo-Vedantist. However, Krishna Mohun remarked:

The Gita props up the pantheistic theology of the Vedanta. The Bible bases its dispensations on an acknowledged personal and individual discrimination between the creator and the creature. The one represents the human spirit as eternal and uncreate; the other pronounces all creatures, animate and inanimate, to have created nothing.

Krishna Mohun contended that the Gita "predicts the destruction of the personal existence and consequently of the individual soul to take place at a certain period." The Bible "inculcates the immortal existence of every individual soul in pleasure or in pain as the religious judgement of God shall allot to every man his own portion." Again, Christianity

40. Ibid, pp. 273-274.
41. Ibid, p. 273
42. Ibid, p. 274.
43. Ibid.
"is a dispensation of love and mercy, righteousness and holiness - asserting the goodness and justice of God and providing for human redemption consistently with divine perfections." The Gita "is entirely silent on those points on which man needs instruction for the purpose of internal salvation." 

44 He held that in some of the very fundamental points the Gita contradicted not only Christianity but also the first principles of Natural Theology by denying the creation of human spirit or by identifying it with the divine one. 

45 In fine, he tried to plead the supremacy of the Bible and Christian theology at length. 

It is evident that Kissory Chand Mitra, though a prominent member of the Hindu-Theo-Philanthropic Society, could not repudiate Vedantic pantheism altogether, while Krishna Mohun Banerjea, another member of the Society, used it as a

44. Ibid, pp. 274-275.

45. Ibid.


47. According to Manmathanath Ghose, whether Kissory Chand Mitra established a Brahma Samaj at Rampur-Boalia in 1273 B.S. is controversial. He retired from service before 1273 B.S. It is likely that he set up a Samaj there in 1254 B.S., which was short-lived due to the want of the support of the local people. It was revived in 1273 B.S., and its foundation was laid by Debendra Nath Tagore in that year. - Ghose, Manmatha Nath, Karamvir Kishorichand Mitra (Bengali), pp. 74-76. There is no concrete evidence in support of M.N. Ghose's contention. Ghose's observation is open to discussion and debate.
platform for launching an attack on Vedantic theism and propagating the cause of Christianity.

Krishna Mohun also made a frontal assault on the followers of Brahmaism and held up the superiority of Christianity. In his essay named, 'The Transition-States Of The Hindu Mind' in 1845 he was highly critical of the members of the Tattvabodhini Sabha. He argued that "they wish on one hand to set up a religion which, on their own principles, cannot fail to prove untenable, inconsistent and powerless" but on the other hand "can never overturn. ... the divine authority of the Vedas" and "most modestly reserve the superior Brahmanism". He added that the very unity of Godhead, which they professed to uphold, was intimately connected with pantheistic views. Again, they desired to wean their countrymen from the bewitching scene of a fascinating idolatry when they dared not condemn it as sinful in itself. He accused them of the lack of proper initiative in the practical reformation i.e. in reformation in practical domestic life. He contended that the movement of the Tattvabodhini Sabha was confined within such a contracted circle that it was impossible

50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 141.
to anticipate their future development. He held that Christianity was the spring of progress in European civilization, particularly of popular improvement and female emancipation - an admission of the superiority of Christianity over Brahmaism.

Krishna Mohun Banerjea became a tireless propagator of the cause of Christianity. As a Minister of the Christ Church he was instrumental in establishing an English school for the education of Hindu children and in instructing them in the Bible. He published a book containing a few elementary words and sermons of the Bible, which were incorporated in the syllabus of the students of the school. In 1841 Pandit Harachandra Tarka Panchanan wrote a book in Sanskrit, attacking Christianity. In answer to the Pandit Krishna Mohun wrote a book named Truth Defended And Errors Exposed in the same year. In that very year he, in order to propagate the cause of Christianity, rendered a Bengali translation of the Bible with the help of the Bishop, Wilson. By 1847 he composed works in English or in Bengali or in Hindi which were calculated to satisfy any curiosity regarding Christianity.

53. Ibid, p. 146.
Krishna Mohun also went on his proselytizing fervour. He was largely instrumental in the conversion of Michael Madhusudan Dutt, who was baptized by Archdeacon Dealtry in the Old Mission Church. The conversion of another brilliant youngman, Gyanendra Mohun Tagore, son of Prosunno Coomar Tagore, was also the fruit of his ministry, Gyanendra Mohun Tagore was baptised eight years after Michael Dutt's conversion. Gyanandra afterwards married Krishna Mohun's daughter and was ably vindicated by his father-in-law in litigation regarding his father's property. 56

The missionary activities, particularly the two conversions as mentioned above, caused a tremendous sensation in the Hindu community and led to the anti-missionary movement headed by Raja Radhakanta Deb, Raja Kali Krishna and other influential men of Calcutta. The movement was aimed not only against Krishna Mohun's work of conversion but also against the missionary efforts of Duff whose eloquence and powerful preaching had already created a sensation among the educated Hindu Youths of Calcutta. Both Duff and Krishna Mohun protested in the pages of the Bengal Hurkarau against the anti-missionary movement, though the latter concealed his identity under a pseudonym. 57

57. Ibid.
In the wake of the anti-missionary movement was founded the Hindu Charitable (or Benevolent) Institution in 1845 for the education of the Hindu children - a move with which Young Bengal like Tarachand Chuckerburty and Ramgopal Ghose were associated. The missionary schools for the education of native children became the centre of Christian instruction and influence. In order to counteract this tendency a meeting was organized by respectable Hindus like Debendranath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Mutty Lal Seal and Kashi Prasad Ghose at Jorasanko on May 18, 1845 and later at Simla on May 24, 1845, for the purpose of establishing a native charitable institution for imparting indigenous instruction to children of Calcutta free from missionary influence. The result was the establishment of the Hindu Charitable Institution in 1845. 58 Tarachand and Ramgopal attended the meeting at Simla. Tarachand was nominated a member of the committee of the proposed school at the meeting. 59 Chunder Shaikhur Deb and Tarachand contributed Rs. 100/- each to the school fund in a month and Omrito Lall Mitra Rs. 25/- in two months. 60 It may be noted that


59. The Friend of India, May 29, 1845.

Shib Chunder Deb was also interested in the foundation of the School. 61

It is noteworthy that along with the anti-Missionary movement Debendranath Tagore defended Brahmaism from the attacks of Alexander Duff and Krishna Mohun Banerjea through a number of essays. These essays were published together in a volume entitled 'Vedantic Doctrines Vindicated' in 1845. 62 Chunder Shaikhur Deb assisted Debendranath Tagore in defending the Brahma Samaj from the attack of the Missionary Party and perhaps in writing a reply to Krishna Mohun Banerjea's articles.63

Ramtanoo Lahiree was sympathetic to the Tattvabodhini Sabha and the Brahma Samaj. 64 But he wrote a letter to Rajnarain Bose dated July 24, 1846, in which he was critical of the Brahmas. He criticised their faith in the divine revelation of the Vedas and compromising attitude towards Hindu idolatry. As he wrote:

I cannot think much of the Vedantic movements here or elsewhere. Their followers merely temporise.

They do not believe that religion is from God, but will not say so to their countrymen, who believe otherwise. Now in my humble opinion, we should never preach doctrines as true in which we have no faith ourselves. I know that the subversion of idolatry is a consummation to be devoutly wished for, but I do not desire it to come about by employing wrong means. I do not allow the principle that means justify the end.  

He was also critical of the intolerant attitude of the Brahmas towards Christianity. He wrote that there was a spirit of hostility entertained by the society against Christianity which was not creditable. "Our desire", he added, "should be to see truth triumph. Let the votaries of all religions appeal to the reason of their fellow-creatures and let him who has truth on his side prevail." Finally, he requested the Secretary of the Tattvabodhini Sabha to discontinue sending him the Society's Patrika as a person who was not a member of the Society could not subscribe to that.

Ramtanoo's criticism of Brahmaism, particularly of the Brahma faith in the divine revelation of the Vedas, appeared at a time when it was attacked not only by the Christians

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66. Ibid., p. 165.
67. Ibid.
like Krishna Mohun Banerjea but also by Akshay Kumar Dutt, the editor of the Tattvabodhini Patrika, and by Dwaraknath Tagore, a follower of Rammohun Roy. As a result Deben-
dranath Tagore, after consultation with the learned Pandits of Kashi, gave up his faith in the divine revelation of the Vedas in April, 1847. In 1848 he also conceived of a new Brahma 'Dharma' which he promulgated through the Tattva-
bodhini Patrika gradually by April, 1857. The Brahma 'Dharma' was based on four conceptions - firstly, the idea of a single God as a creator of the universe, secondly, God as the embodiment of knowledge, eternity and well-being, as the regulator of the universe, as being omniscient and omnipotent but formless (Nirakar) and as the only single omnipotent, distinct and perfect entity, which is superior over each and everything, and stand in comparison with none or nothing, thirdly, 'Upasana' to God (pure devotion or 'Bhakti') for good in this world and the world to come, and fourthly, love to God and His created Beings and fulfilment of His desired ends as the chief essence of 'Upasana'. In explaining this new Brahma faith Debendranath contended that he did not give up the ideas of the Vedas or of the

68. Ghose, Benoy, op. cit., p. 28; Bandopadhyay, B.N., "Akshay Kumar Dutt", Sahitya Sadhak Charitamala (Bengali, Vol. I), No. 12, 4th edition, p. 22; Bagal, J.C. "Deben-

69. Ghose, Benoy, op. cit., p. 29.

Upanishads altogether. He had based his Brahma creed upon the parts of those Shastras which he considered to be true or proper. But he and his followers did not abandon their compromising attitude to idolatrous customs and practices of his countrymen and steered a middle course between popular Hinduism and total reformation.

Shib Chander Deb established a Brahma Samaj in Midnapur, which was later revived by Rajnarain Bose in a flourishing condition. Sometime after his transfer to 24-Pargunhs as the Deputy Collector in 1850, he formally embraced the Brahma "Dharma" and became a member of the Brahma Samaj. He also introduced his wife and children to this faith.

In 'A Lecture On Vedantism' in 1851 Krishna Mohun Banerjea renewed his attack on the Brahma religion. He maintained that Rammohun's Brahmaism savoured of pantheism and idolatry for the masses, and thereby gave a decided advantage to his enemies, the advocates of popular Hinduism. Turning to Debendranath Tagore and his followers, he observed: "The Anglicised Vedanta, inculcated by the

71(a). Heimsath, C.H., Indian Nationalism And Hindu Social Reform, pp. 77-78.
Tattvabodhini Sabha, is neither the doctrine of the Upanishads, nor of pure theism.\textsuperscript{74}

Even the pure theism which they professed, he added, seemed invariably to evaporate the moment they walked out of the doors of the Brahma Samaj or the meetings of the Tattvabodhini Sabha. Again, as far as the debasing idolatry and corrupt institutions of the country were concerned, the neo-Vedantists of the Tattvabodhini Sabha had done nothing for their discomfiture.\textsuperscript{75} He added further that they had not entered into a practical protest against early marriage, polygamy, the unsocial separation of caste, the cruel prohibition on the marriage of widows, infanticide and the customs of zenna.\textsuperscript{76} He concluded: "such practice will never regenerate India."\textsuperscript{77}

He was critical of the hostility of the members of the Tattvabodhini Sabha to the progress of Christianity. He looked up to the teachings of the Bible as a cure for idolotry or as a remedy for the evils of the country.\textsuperscript{78}

without supporting Brahmaism or Christianity Rusick Krishna Mullick, while a Deputy Collector of Burdwan, wrote between 1854 and 1855 a note on religion entitled "What

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, pp. 111-112.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, pp. 112-113.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, pp. 111 & 113.
Is The Reason That People Last Agree In Religion? In this note Rusick held up certain religious ideas which he called the first principles of religion. He contended that the ideas were common to all men and all religions since times immemorial and universal belief among mankind. These were the following - belief in the existence of a God, our ascriptions of different attributes to God, our idea of a future state of reward and punishment, or, in other words, our notion of hell and heaven, our idea of man as a sinful being, and needing therefore atonement and forgiveness, our idea of the necessity of repentance, propiation, sacrifice, sanctification, and redemption, our idea of the necessity of prayer, and finally our idea of the salvation.79 These ideas closely resembled the Natural Theological concept of God as a moral governor of the universe and were not based upon any particular religious creed.

He did not share the fanaticism of Alexander Duff or the intolerant attitude of a number of Hindus or the Brahmas like Debendranath Tagore towards Christianity. He asked: "What purpose then is served by our vehement denunciation of the faith of others? Does not these denunciations serve on the contrary to create bad feelings and

79. The Hindoo Patriot, September 29 & October 6, 1862, pp. 311 & 317.
thereby effectually to prevent the fulfilment of the object aimed at."  

He held that the first principles were prevented from being rooted into the mind of men due to imperfect education, prepossessions, bias and adverse circumstances by which men were surrounded. These ideas were unfolded to man in proportion to the development of his mental faculties. He suggested that education, which would not confine itself in the teaching of this, or the teaching of that but would extend to the properest and fullest development of all the faculties, whether of the body or of the mind, with which we had been endowed, assuredly for the best of purposes by all-seeing and all-wise providence. He, therefore, stood not for Vedantic or Biblical teaching but for education in broadest sense of the term as a means of religious reformation.

While he stood against religious errors and failings of men, he held that great caution was necessary as to how to deal with the prejudices and prepossessions of mankind in reference to religious beliefs.

80. Ibid, October 13, 1862, p. 327.
81. Ibid, September 29, 1862, p. 311.
82. Ibid, October 5, 1862, p. 317.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid, October 13, 1862, p. 327.
85. Ibid, October 5, 1862, p. 317.
He was of opinion that every form of religion did not singly and simply teach the first principles of religion but was intermixed with a great deal of adventitious matter. He added that the task of a reformer of a religion should be to disentangle it of what did not justly belong to it. In his opinion priests and political despots, who had exercised a vast influence over men, were largely responsible for the corruption of religion. That was why efforts had all been made to restore it to its original form and beauty. In this connection he had referred to different sages and reformers of different religions of the world. It is noteworthy that he commended Rammohun Roy for his labour to point out what he deemed the true sense of Hindu scriptures and thereby to extricate it from the gross pluralities with which a self-aggrandizing priesthood had encumbered it.

It is revealing that he spoke of Mahomed as "the imposter," while he referred to Jesus Christ as an unparallel name in the religious annals of the world. It is no less revealing that he had soft corner for some Hindu Shastras.

86. Ibid, September 29, 1862, p. 311.
87. Ibid, October 13, 1862, p. 328.
88. Ibid, p. 326.
89. Ibid, p. 327.
90. Ibid.
In his opinion the idea of salvation was beautifully expressed in the Bhagbat Gita. The verses of the Gita on it, he observed, would bring to the mind of the enlightened Christian reader many passages in the New Testament on the same subject, which were truly and sublimely beautiful. It may be noted in this connection that he placed the Gita on a footing of equality with the Bible in some respects whereas Krishna Mohun Banerjea considered the Bible to be superior to the Gita in an essay in the Hindu Thee-Philanthropic Society. Again, Rusick acknowledged the Upanishads to be truly grand and majestic and at the same time beautiful. He remarked that "the refined system of religion, which ... the Upanishads teach, is not followed by the vast majority of the people, who claim to be the followers of Hinduism." He added: "In these writings are inculcated the sublime views of Godhead and man's duties to his Maker, and his fellow-creators." He was aware of an objection that the Upanishads gave a pantheistic view of God. But he opined that "a certain number of passages upon which this is founded admits of a different interpretation."

92. Ibid, October 6, 1862, p. 317.
93. Ibid, October 13, 1862, pp. 327-328.
94. Ibid, p. 327.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid, p. 327.
Duckinarunjan Mukhopadhyay was a fervent admirer of Rammohun Roy. Once he told Rajnarain Bose that the Upanishads constituted the Bible of the Brahma. He was of opinion that service in the assembly of the Brahma should consist of only readings from the devotional songs as was the practice during Rammohun's time. Because of their (Debendranath Tagore and his followers) departure from the original practice, Duckinarunjan called the Samaj the "non-Hindu Brahma Samaj". He was a believer in the Upanishadic monotheism. He was not, however, a registered follower of the Brahma Samaj. He later lived like an orthodox Hindu in Oudh.

II. Whither Young Bengal After 1857?

The conflict between Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen started in early sixties. Debendranath's


98. For details Chapter VIII, Section II F. p. 511.


100. Palit Chittabrate, New Viewpoints On Nineteenth Century Bengal, [Chapter 15, Sen, Keshab Chandra, 1838-1884 pp. 177-178.
conservatism is usually cited as an important cause of the conflict. But there were other important issues. Keshub proposed the formation of a representative assembly for keeping up contact of the Brahma Samaj with different Samajes of Madras and Bombay for mutual improvement. Such assembly was formed. Several meetings of the assembly were held in 1865. Debendranath apprehended that if such an assembly was allowed to work, the leadership of the Brahma Samaj of Calcutta would slip out of his control. He virtually sought to frustrate the operations of the assembly and the tussle between Debendranath and Keshub started, leading eventually to a split in the Brahma Samaj in November, 1866. 101

In fact, Keshub's socio-religious ideal was broader than that of Debendranath. Keshub visualized a kind of unity of the whole of India on the religious plane. That was why he named his Samaj as the Brahma Samaj of India (November 11, 1866). 102 In a lecture in the Bethune Society on December 19, 1867 he concluded that much depended upon the blending of all the races by instituting a system of active cooperation among the educated natives of all Presidencies and provinces. 103 He conceived the idea of the Albert Hall

103. Ibid, p. 36; Also the Proceedings and Transactions of the Bethune Society (From November 10, 1859 to April 20, 1869), Part II, December 19, 1867, p. CXV.
(formally opened on April 26, 1876) for literary and social intercourse among all classes of community, Hindus, Mehomedans, Christians, Native Christians and Brahmas. 104

He stood for mass singing (Sankirtan), day-long prayers and services, taking out of procession with accompaniment of 'Khole' and 'Kartal' (venerated instruments of Vaishnavas etc.). 105 This suggests that his idea was to make Brahmaism more appealing to the masses.

Added to these, Keshub was an advanced reformer, more advanced than Debendranath. Between 1860 and 1862 he drew up a programme of social reform for the Church against the reservations of Debendranath that the Brahmas must work within the pale of the Hindu community, confining their attention to religion and avoiding a show-down with the Hindu customs. 106 In 1862, in a lecture on 'The Destiny Of Human Life', he condemned untouchability as a man-made ungodly evil. In another lecture on 'Social Reformation In India' in 1863 he called upon his countrymen to destroy caste and to construct a universal brotherhood. In a letter to Debendranath in 1861 he expressed his anxiety for devising means for having inter-caste marriages validated by

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104. The Indian Daily News, April 28, 1876 (Opening of the Albert Hall); Also Bagal, J.C. "Keshub Chunder Sen, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala (Vol. 7), No. 97, pp. 60-61.

105. Palit, Jibabrata, New Viewpoints on Nineteenth Century Bengal, p. 178.

106. Ibid., pp. 177-178.
legislation. In 1862 the first inter-caste marriage was brought about by him under the Church. 107 He did not rest till in 1872 he could get the Brahma Marriage Act enacted by the Government. 108 He was a staunch champion of women's education and improvement. On February 14, 1866 he took initiative in organizing for the first time a women's conference for discussing the all-round development of females. 109 Later he set-up the Indian Reform Association (at the end of 1870) one object of which was female improvement. 110 He helped Miss Mary Carpenter (who arrived in Calcutta on November 20, 1866) in establishing a Female Normal School along with the Bethune School. 111 When the Normal Female School was in a worse condition in 1871, Keshub took initiative in founding a Female Normal and Adult School on February 1, 1871. 112 The Indian Reform Association took interest in the school. 113 While inaugurating the prayer hall of the Brahma Samaj of India on August 22, 1869, Keshub openly enunciated the idea of equal rights of women with men.

107. Ibid, p. 175.
108. Ibid; Also Bagal, J.C. "Keshub Chandra Sen", Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala (Vol. 9), No. 97, pp. 42-43.
110. Ibid, p. 50.
111. Ibid, p. 40.
112. Ibid, pp. 75-78.
113. Ibid, p. 83.
114. Ibid, p. 43.
In his lecture on "Reconstruction Of Native Society" in the Bengal Social Science Association on March 14, 1872 he advocated freedom of women in all walks of life. In fine, the Indian Reform Association was founded with five fold objects including female improvement. Other objects were the opening of industrial school and education of the working class of people, distribution of literatures at cheaper costs, temperance and prohibition upon the drinking of wine, and charity. Thus Keshub and his followers wanted to quicken the pace of social reform in Bengal.

Before the complete rupture between Kesub and Debendranath in November, 1866, Shib Chunder Deb was a follower of the latter. Shib Chunder retired from service in 1862, and on May 28 of that year he established a Brahma Samaj in his house at Konnagar. The Samaj was set up under the auspices of Debendranath and his Brahma Samaj. Debendranath contributed much to the fund raised by Shib Chunder Deb for the construction of a prayer hall of the Konnagar Samaj.

115. Ibid, p. 57.
116. Ibid, pp. 50-54.
It is noteworthy that the writings of the *Indian Field* (edited by Kissory Chand Mitra from May, 1859) on socio-religious issues came as a sharp attack upon the relatively conservative group of the Brahmas led by Debendranath Tagore. The paper wrote that Hinduism was "a monster evil", "an incubus on all improvements", and "essentially false and wholly incompatible with moral and social reform". 118 This remark may remind one of the aggressive heterodoxy of a number of Derozio's disciples or of educated youths in Derozio's time and in the post-Derozio period, which resulted from the first contact with western education or from constant touch with zealous Christian missionaries like Alexander Duff. However, the paper raised a sharp protest against the traditional customs and practices like polygamy, early marriage, the system of zenna, infanticide and idolatrous practices like the Durga Puja. 119 It criticised the contradiction of a number of educated Hindus between profession and practice. 120 It ended on an appeal to the educated youths to make an organized move against social customs, particularly against caste, polygamy, early marriage and idolatrous Durga Puja for the promotion of social reform.

120. *Ibid*, February 9, 1861.
and improvement of the country. One cannot safely say that the writings came from Kissory Chand's pen. But the editorial responsibility for the publication of the articles devolved upon him.

In early sixties i.e. in years of conflict between conservative and progressive groups of the Brahmas Krishna Mohun Banerjea was in his full form as a Christian propagator. About 1862 he was selected by Bishop Cotton to be one of the special preachers at St. Paul's cathedral for a course of lectures to be given to educated Hindus "On The Need, Evidences And Difficulties Of A Supernatural Revelation." Bishop Cotton gave first lecture and was followed in turn by Archdeacon Pratt, Rev. K.M. Banerjea and others. These lectures were repeated in the Free Church Institution at the request of the Rev. W.C. Fyfe. The attendance at the latter place was greater than at the Cathedral owing to its location in the Indian quarter. In 1863 Krishna Mohun delivered a lecture on "The Claims Of Christianity In British India". This was afterwards published under the title "Revelation, Christianity And The Bible" by Bishop Cotton in 1864. A few days afterwards, the second lecture of the series was delivered by Krishna Mohun at the Cathedral. It was

121. Ibid, October 5, 1859, April 28, 1861 & October 19, 1861.
largely attended. In October, 1865 he lectured at St. Paul's Cathedral on "The Peculiar Responsibility Of Educated Natives - And Their Duty To Enquire Into The Christian Scheme Of Salvation Thoughtfully."^{122}

Obviously in his missionary zeal Krishna Mohun, in a comment in April, 1865 on the impending split in the Brahma Samaj, dismissed Keshub's universalism as a dangerous form of eclecticism.^{123} Krishna Mohun maintained that Brahmaism was not all different from Brahminism etymologically. Both words, he said, were derived from the word "bram" which meant a mantra of the Vedas. He maintained in strong terms that Brahmaism was essentially eclectic and fleeting, and it had no distinct principles as its supporters maintained.^{124}

It is interesting to note that Kissory Chand Mitra took up the pen as if to defend Brahmaism from the attacks of missionaries like Duff and Krishna Mohun Banerjea. The chief contention of Krishna Mohun or Duff was that Vedantism

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was pantheistic and did not inculcate the concept of a Personal God as taught by the Bible. Kissory Chand Mitra contended that the system inculcated in the Vedas and the Upanishads "is neither Pantheism nor Materialism. It neither degrades God nor elevates the universe." He added that Vedantism closely resembled what Spinoza taught - our happiness and freedom consisted in constant and eternal love of God. He added further that "it teaches not that there is no personal God, but that human mind, ... is incapable of understanding Him, and realising His attributes." Again the epithet of "Nirakar" (formless) and "Nirgoon" (void of qualities) as predicted by the Vedanta of the Supreme Being did not mean that 'He is nonety'. 'Human speech is utterly inadequate to a conception and expression of the divine mature.' Moreover, the Vedanta describes the Supreme Being not only by negatives but asserts His positive attributes. He concluded that the Brahmans during the phase of their faith believed in a. Personal God and His attributes.

126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid, p. 89.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
In a reply to the charge of Krishna Mohun regarding the faith of the Brahmas in the divine revelation of the Vedas - a charge brought by him in 1833, 1845 and 1851, what Kissory Chand wrote is interesting. Kissory Chand observed whether Rammohun Roy believed in the divine revelation of the Vedas was very doubtful. In his opinion Rammohun believed in a Great and Living God and His Power, wisdom and goodness. He laboured to destroy the idolatry of the Puranas and to revive the monotheistic doctrine of the Vedas. He was an eclectic philosopher and a theo-philanthropist. He endeavoured to engraft on them a new kind of universal unitarianism.

Kissory Chand, however, admitted that Debendranath and his followers had faith in the divine revelation of the Vedas. But he contended that this faith was confined to a limited number of men around Debendranath. He further pointed out that Debendranath ultimately gave up the faith in the infallible authority of the Vedas and the Puranic idolatry.

131. Ibid, pp. 87-88.
132. Ibid, p. 89.
Kissory Chand, of course, shared the critical attitude of Krishna Mohun towards the compromising stance of the Brahmas. He observed that few Brahmas had evinced moral courage to exterminate social evils, which were eating into the vitality of the native society. He added that the Samaj in all stages had denounced idolatry and caste but its members, with few honourable exceptions, were in point of fact wedded to the antiquated customs of the country. It was useless for them to plead that the country was not yet ripe for social reforms. In thus criticising the contradiction of the Brahmas between thought and action Kissory Chand virtually went to strengthen the cause of the more progressive Brahmas led by Keshub Chandra Sen.

Kissory Chand drew closer to Keshub's Brahma Samaj of India. The Indian Reform Association was formed on November 3, 1870 by the Samaj with Keshub Chunder as its President and Gobinda Chunder Dhar as its Honorary Secretary. Kissory Chand was a member of the Association. He took an active interest in its proceedings. It is interesting


to note that the Association opened an Industrial School and a Working Men's Institution. Kissory Chand was interested in the school. He delivered a speech to celebrate the opening of it. 137

Yet Kissory Chand's commitment to progressive ideal of social change was not bold. In a paper read in the Bengal Social Science Association in 1868 he admitted that the barbarities of the Charak Puja were not enjoined or even warranted by the Shastras. But he was not ready to invoke the interference of the Government with the religious observances connected with the Charak Puja. 138 He ended on the following note:

This country is in a state of transition. The day is not far distant when the festivals of the Hindus may be eliminated of all that is barbarous and superstitious and rendered subservient to the promotion of their social and rational happiness. 139

137. Ibid.
139. Ibid.
It is noteworthy that at a meeting of the Amratola Literary Club held on May 21, 1872 he delivered a lecture on Chaitanya viewed as a mystic, and on Hindu mysticism. One may be tempted to suggest that he became a bit interested in mysticism towards the close of his life.

However, the split in the Brahma Samaj in 1866 had impact upon some other members of Young Bengal like Ramtanoo Lahiree and Shib Chunder Deb. Ramtanoo, though not a registered Brahma, came in close touch with Keshub's movement. He took part in many of its proceedings.

Since the secession of Keshub and his followers from Debendranath's Samaj Shib Chunder Deb and the Konnagar Samaj showed sympathy with the Brahma Samaj of India. The Konnagar Samaj, however, acted independently of both Samajes. At its anniversary festivals the leaders of both Samajes conducted services alternately. But Shib Chunder had highest respect and esteem for Keshub as a religious teacher and reformer.

142. Ghose, Abinash Chandra, loc. cit., pp. 244-245.
But a storm of controversy arose over the proceedings of the new Samaj under the leadership of Keshub Chunder Sen. A number of Brahmas like Ananda Mohun Basu, Vijoy Krishna Goswami, Shivnath Shastri, Durga Mohun Das and Umesh Chandra Dutt found certain inconsistencies in the proceedings of the Samaj and grew critical of Keshub's leadership. Shib Chunder Deb joined them and took prime initiative in the matter. 142(a) In a letter to Protap Chunder Majoomdar, Assistant Secretary to the Brahma Samaj of India, on May 18, 1878, Shib Chunder wrote that the Samaj was run undemocratically without consulting the opinion of the majority of the Brahmas. In the name of the catholic theism questionable doctrines not assented to by a majority of the Brahmas, and asceticism, he added, seemed to have been promulgated as cardinal principles of the Samaj. In practice popery and priesthood had crept into the Church. He added further that during the last four or five years the ideal of pure theism had been considerably lowered chiefly because those who led the Brahma Samaj winked at, if not countenanced, certain abject pseudo-religious conduct of their followers. He, therefore, contended that the Church had lost its pure catholocity and that sectarianism had entered its precincts. 143

Moreover, Shib Chunder Deb's letter touched on the issue of the Kutch Behar Marriage (March 6, 1878) which sparked off a controversy between Keshub's followers and the protesting Brahmas. Keshub gave his eldest daughter, Suniti Debi of only 13, in marriage to the minor ruler of Kutch Behar in violation of the Native Civil Marriage Act (March, 1872) passed largely through the initiative of the Indian Reform Association, an organizational wing of the Brahma Samaj of India - an Act, which fixed the minimum age for the bride and bridegroom at the age of 16 and 14 respectively. Moreover, contrary to the Act, which laid down that the marriage was not to be solemnized according to the norms of the traditional Hindu religion, nor to be officiated by an orthodox Brahmin, the Kutch Behar marriage was performed by a Brahmin priest in the presence of the images of Hindu deities according to the Hindu rites. The Brahma form of prayer was not followed. Besides, Keshub's brother made "dana" of his daughter as Keshub's visit to England was meant to have involved the loss of caste according to traditional Hinduism. Shib Chunder Deb contended that the marriage was a violation of the Brahma norms, because the parties to the marriage did not arrive at proper ages. Again, the Secretary to the Samaj sanctioned caste distinction by allowing an orthodox Brahmin to officiate at the marriage.

or by allowing Keshub's brother to make 'dana' of his daughter on the question of Keshub's loss of caste according to the notion of traditional Hinduism.  

Ultimately, a rift in the Samaj became impending, and despite of Protap Chunder Mazoomdar's appeal to the rebels to maintain unity in the rank of the Brahmans, the rift took place in 1878. Keshub's Samaj came to be known as the New Dispensation and the Samaj of his opponents as the Sadharan Brahma Samaj.

Keshub sought to place the New Dispensation on a universal basis. He began to propagate that though Brahmaism was essentially based on certain elements of Hinduism, its fulfilment lay in the synthesis of all religious. He, however, started adoring religious leaders like Shakya Mooni, Jesus Christ, Mahomet and Chaitanya through "Sadhan-Bhajan" (a kind of devotional songs). One may contend that this smacks of a style of religious saint or a mystic. But one should note that he was still an advocate of some progressive social reforms, particularly of higher education for

Hindu women. In 1882 he started a new kind of school for higher education of females, which developed into the Victoria College about January, 1883.\textsuperscript{149} He, of course, did not advocate similar type of higher instruction both for the male and female. He suggested that education for females which was suited to their nature and constitutions and requirements of native families and society.\textsuperscript{150}

However, after the schism Shib Chunder's house at Konnagar became something like a pilgrimage to the members of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. The members of the New Samaj often went to his house to be inspired by him.\textsuperscript{151} He served the Samaj as its Secretary from its commencement upto December, 1679. In January, 1880 he was elected its President and held the office for five years consecutively. After an interval of one year, he was again elected the President in 1887. He retired from the office in 1888.\textsuperscript{152} His presidential addresses testified to the growing activity of the Samaj as a religious and social organization in and outside Bengal.\textsuperscript{153}

While Shib Chunder Deb became one of the leading figures of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, Ramtanoo Lahiree drew closer

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid, pp. 86 & 87; For details of this school, Ibid, pp. 86 - 90.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, pp. 93-94.
\textsuperscript{151} Ghose, Abinash Chandra, \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 209.
\textsuperscript{152} Ghose, Abinash Chandra, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 245.
\textsuperscript{153} Ghose, Abinash Chandra, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 355-367.
to it. Upon the birth of the Samaj in 1878 more than one tie bound him to it. He became identified with its aim and aspirations. 154

In the period of significant turns in the Brahma Samaj in 1866 and 1878 Peary Chand Mitra leaned towards spiritualism. He was a Brahma in inclination, though not a registered Brahma at any stage. After the death of his wife in 1860 he took to the study of spiritualism. 154(a) He had books on spiritual subjects brought from London, America and Russia, and studied those carefully. Shortly, he became associated with the spiritualist associations of London. He himself got/enlisted as an honorary member of the British National Association of Spiritualists (1873) and Central Association of Spiritualists (1882) in London. He was an assistant Secretary of the Calcutta United Association of Spiritualists (1880). He wrote many essays and books on spiritualism. Some of his essay found place in the following Papers - Spiritualist of London, Banner of Light of America and Theosophy of Bombay. 155 Among his notable works in the English were 'Stray Thoughts On Spiritualism' (1880) and 'On The Soul; Its Nature And Development' (1881) which were

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highly appreciated in England, America and India. He also composed a number of Bengali works on spiritualism - *Gitankur* (1861), *Jatkincnit* (1865), *Avedhi* (1871) and *Adhyatmika*. (1880) etc.

When he turned a spiritualist, he became a bit critical of the Brahmas. In his *Adhyatmika* he remarked that the Brahmas lacked real religious spirit. In his 'Avedi', he did not consider Brahmaism (particularly after Rammohun's death) as the proper form of expression of religious feeling of man.

As a spiritualist his was a mystic voice, a far-cry from the rational enquiry of his college days, even from reformism of some of his associates. As he observed:

> Spiritualism is in opposition with materialism. Whatever may be the object or pursuit in this life, the life to come must be always before us. Man possessing the brain-life, moving and having his being in it, is naturally an external being ... As thoughts are less external and more internal, he realizes the spiritual element.


159. Mitra, Peary Chand, *Stray Thoughts On Spiritualism*, p. 3.
He held that Yoga and spiritualism aimed at the same end - "the gradual extinction of the carnal and impressional life." He concluded that all upheavings of thought would eventually culminate in the undying and progressive light of the soul through which we "realize God as the light of lights, as the light of wisdom [and] as the light of love." He added that there was no knowledge, which was much calculated to promote the happiness of man as the spiritualist philosophy.

In fact, Peary Chand became largely occupied with the Yoga or with the spiritual life. The Preface in Adhyatmika reads as follows: "In 1871 I wrote the Avedi, a spiritual novel in Bengali in which the hero and heroine have been described as earnest seekers after the knowledge of soul, and how by education of pain they obtained spiritual life." In Avedi Peary Chand glorified the spiritual life of the hero, Anweshan Chandra and the heroine, Patibhabini which knew no physical pleasure or sensual delights.

160. Mitra, Peary Chand, On The Soul; Its Nature And Development, p. 2; Also Mitra, Peary Chand, Stray Thoughts on Spiritualism, p. 5.
162. Ibid., p. 1.
In Adhyatmika he focussed attention on the spiritual life of Adhyatika, the only daughter of Haradev Tarkalankar—a life undisturbed by the problems as well as temptations of the world—a soul elevated by means of the Yoga. In Jatkinchit he was occupied with the thought of the majesty of God or of the immortality of the soul as inculcated by some of the Hindu Shastras. In Gitankur thirty-five devotional songs had been composed after the Brahma Sungeet of Rammohun's days. A ringing note of some songs was the elevation of the soul to such a level as to realize the glory of God.

It may be noted that Peary Chand was later drawn towards theosophy. In 1877 he was a corresponding fellow of the Theosophical Society in New York (1875). Col. H.S. Olcott and Madame H.P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Society, came to Bombay in 1875 and established a sister society there. In October of the same year they started a Paper named 'Theosophist.' In the first number of the Paper Peary Chand's essay on 'the Inner God' was published. In this essay Peary Chand wrote: "the end of spiritualism is theosophy. Spiritualists and theosophists..."
should, therefore, be united and bring their thoughts to bear on this great end. On March 19, 1882 Olcott came to Calcutta. At a meeting held on April 1, 1882, in honour of Olcott, Peary Chand delivered an address on theosophy. Peary Chand upheld the esoteric philosophy inculcated in the Hindu religion:

What the Maharshis and Rishis had taught in the Vedas, Upanishads, Yoga, Tantras and Puranas, is that Divinity is in humanity, and that the life assimilated to Divinity is the spiritual life - the life of 'Nirvana' which is attainable by extinguishing the natural life by Yoga, culminating in the development of the spiritual life. He added that spiritualism, occultism and theosophy, all grew and flourished here. But ages of misrule had thrown them back. The study of European sciences had taken their place. They were no doubt good in their way, but they could not reveal the secrets of nature which could only be known through soul, the study of which it was the duty of every God-fearing person to encourage in every possible way.

On April 5, 1882 Olcott gave a speech in the Town Hall on Theosophy, the scientific basis of religion. On April 6, 1882 Madan Blavatsky reached Calcutta. In the evening of that day a meeting was held and the formation of a branch of the

169. Ibid, p. 188.
170. Ibid.
171. Ibid, pp. 188-189.
Theosophical Society in Bengal was decided upon. On April 17 a Managing Committee was formed. Peary Chand became President of the Society. Under his presidency fortnightly meetings of the Committee were held from time to time in the office of the Indian Mirror. Peary Chand served as the President of the Society till his death on November 23, 1883.\textsuperscript{172}

As Peary Chand became absorbed in spiritualism or in theosophy, his reformist impulse went down. In \textit{Jatikinchit} he was occupied with the subject of the development of the soul rather than with the issue of social reformation.\textsuperscript{173} In \textit{Avedi} he even poured ridicule upon Keshub's group to a certain extent.\textsuperscript{174}

But it is rash to think that he was altogether devoid of the reformist spirit. His writings on the Hindu Shastras struck up a note of Hindu revivalism. But he reinterpreted Hindu Shastras or traditions to vindicate that in ancient India there were cases of intercaste marriage,\textsuperscript{175} and of the

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid, pp. 189 - 190.
\textsuperscript{174} Mitra, Peary Chand, \textit{Avedi}, Ibid, pp. 434-440; Asit Kumar Bandopadhyay thinks that he was more sympathetic to the \textit{Adi Brahma Samaj}, Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed.), op. cit., Introduction, p. 10.
marriage of girls at an advanced age. He contended that freedom of choice was allowed to Hindu females in case of marriage either through "Swayambhara" or "Ganderva Vivaha". He added that polygamy was not authorised by some Hindu Shastras. In his Ramarajika there was even a note in Harihar's dialogues that the dowry system, which was in vogue in Kulin marriage, was not permitted in ancient time. Again, the custom of seclusion or the Purda Pratha was not in vogue in ancient time. He held that there were examples of women being advanced in learning and knowledge. He desired that

176. Ibid, pp. 475, 489-491; Also Mitra, Peary Chand, Ramarajika (Harihar's dialogue), Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), loc. cit., p. 239.


women should be placed with men on the footing of equality.\footnote{Mitra, Peary Chand, *Bamatoshini* (Krishna Mohun's speech at the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge), Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), loc. cit., pp. 573-574.}

Three things are worth nothing in this connection. Firstly, he revealed a flair of revivalist spirit, which was directed against the Muslim rule. He thought that the custom of seclusion originated in the Muslim period.\footnote{Mitra, Peary Chand, *Ramaranjika*, Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), op. cit., p. 240.} Secondly, in his revivalist mood he did not seek to justify early marriage\footnote{Mitra, Peary Chand, *Bamatoshini*, Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), loc. cit., p. 573.} which he sought to do in the society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838). He, of course, referred to the "Gonderva Vivaha" which might be subject to some questions. Thirdly, he conceived a broad idea of female education - intellectual, moral, spiritual and industrial education. He, however, insisted on religious instruction and informal method of instruction of females.\footnote{Mitra, Peary Chand, Adhyatmika (Preface, 25th Section, Dialogues of two females named Kunayani and Hemlata), Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), op. cit., pp. 499-500, 536, 538. Mitra, Peary Chand, *Ramaranjika* (Preface, Also Hariharr's dialogues, Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), op. cit., pp. 191, 194-197, 213, 217-218. Mitra, Peary Chand, *Bamatoshini* (Preface, VIIth Section, Speeches of Rusick and Krishna Mohun at the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge), Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), op. cit., pp. 557-558, 572, 574.}

Yet one may suggest that Peary Chand's reformist spirit definitely got watered down to some extent when one sees that
he was an advocate of the horrible rite of Sati,\textsuperscript{186} which his teacher, Derozio and some of his fellow college mates decried in no uncertain terms. Again, Peary Chand, who was an advocate of widow-marriage in 1855, suggested the idea of Brahmacharya or austere widowhood.\textsuperscript{187} One may contend that spiritualism or theosophy occupied his attention so much that his reformist enthusiasm ebbed away.

In fine, Krishna Mohun Banerjea was an advocate of Hindu social reformation. But he was a Christian preacher till the last days of his life. In 1875 his second best known work, Arian Witness was published by the Thacker Sprink & Co. of Calcutta. This contained a powerful argument addressed to educated Indians proving how some of the ancient legends and tradition of the Vedic scriptures bore unconscious testimony to the facts mentioned in the Bible. As for instance the Vedas insisted on the sacrifice offered for the 'Gods' or 'mortals' by "the Lord of the Creation" and showed how the same Lord initiated sacrificial rites designated to perpetuate the memory of Himself. On its publication, Krishna Mohun immediately presented a copy of the book to Duff, who congratulated him on it. In 1880 he published two supplementary


\textsuperscript{187} Mitra, Peary Chand, \textit{Etadeshiya Striloker Purbabastha}, Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 489, 495-496; Mitra, Peary Chand, \textit{Avedi} (Sarala's, (a widow's) emark in reply to the proposal of her re-marriage), Bandopadhyay, Asit Kumar (ed), \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 442.
essays to the Arian Witness with a view to elucidating certain points to which certain objections were raised by his critics. In the following year he wrote another pamphlet 'Relation Between Christianity And Hinduism' for the orthodox Mission in Calcutta. 188

It may be noted that Krishna Mohun, though a zealous Christian, could not altogether escape the powerful pull of Hinduism. He reviewed Hindu philosophical systems in "Hariarn" (1867, Total number of pages > 526), prepared an anthology of Hindu mythologies titled "Gajalaksana (1851), with text and English translation, 1851), translated "Shraman (1865), and translated the first and second mandalas of the Rikveda (1875), with extensive notes. 189

III. Conclusion

Derozio's ideal of scepticism thus left no lasting trace upon Young Bengal. In Derozio's life-time some members of Young Bengal became Brahmas or deists at heart or drew closer to the Brahmas, while some were in continual association with Alexander Duff. In the period after Derozio's death some like Krishna Mohun Banerjea, Mohesh Chunder Ghose and Madhob Chunder Mullick embraced Christianity. Of them Krishna

188. The Bengal Past and Present, Vol. XXXVIII, (October-December), Serial No. 76, 1929, pp. 140-141.
189. Bagal, J.C. "Krishna Mohun Bandopadhyay", Sahitya Sadhak Charitra (Vol. 6), No. 72, pp. 63 - 64.
Mohun was a preacher of Christianity till the last day of his life, though he could not altogether escape the powerful pull of Hinduism. Some like Shib Chunder Deb formally joined the Brahma Samaj of which Tarachand Chuckerburtee and Chunder Shaikhr Deb were members since Derozio's time. Shib Chunder changed his stance with the changing phase of the Brahma movement and played a vital role in the split of the Brahma Samaj leading to the formation of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. A number of Young Bengal like Gobind Chunder Bysack, Omrito Lall Mitra, Ramtanoo Lahiree and Ramgopal Ghose was closer to the Brahmans in one way or another or at one time or another but not formal members of the Samaj. Some like Peary Chand Mitra and Duckinarunjan Mukhopadhyay were Brahmaists at heart but not registered Brahmans. Peary Chand ultimately turned a spiritualist or a theosopist. Rusick Krishna Mullick's note on religion struck up a note of universal theism while Kissory Chand Mitra, who leaned towards Natural Theology for a time, later drew close to Keshub's Brahma Samaj of India and ultimately became a bit interested in mysticism.