CHAPTER - IV

Bankim Chandra's View on Religion
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4.1 Bankim Chandra’s Concept of Religion

There are many faiths, but the spirit is one,

in me, in you, and in every man.

Leo Tolstoy

In the 19th century, due to the impact of western influence, there was a widespread tendency to give reasons for and against about things in general. Religion too faced a similar consequence. In Bengal too, the impact of western influence led young men to question the validity of every classical interpretations of the problem of life. Again attempts to understand religion as either dependent on morality or science or art or as a kind of philosophy have lead to a great variety of opinions amongst the classical western philosophers. The significant references of this in philosophy are found in Kant, Mathew Arnold, Hegel, Tylor and many others.\(^{(1)}\) Endeavour to separate religion on the other hand from other aspects of understandings, is not old. “... The enterprise initiated by Schleiermacher to rescue religion from obscurity and to isolate what is unique in it by approaching it psychologically, dominates our thinking to – day ....”\(^{(2)}\) According to Schleiermacher pure religion is pure feeling i.e. feeling disconnected from thought on the one hand and morality or action on the other. Rudolf Otto following Schleiermacher’s method has opined, Religion is self – certifying.\(^{(3)}\)

This trend of understanding religion as religion is found in the opinion of Bankim Chandra, of course in his own way. He observes that we have heard of a religion of Art, and a religion of science but what then is religion. To such an inquiry Bankim Chandra opines, “........ I am not one of those who think that a belief in God, or in a number of gods, or in a future existence, or in anything else which does not admit of proof, constitutes religion. But when such belief, or any belief whatever, furnishes a basis for conduct ........ for the conduct of the individual towards himself as well as towards others, when by becoming a common faith and therefore furnishing a common basis of conduct.
it becomes a bond of union between man and man, a standard by which human existence individual and aggregate, comes to be regulated, it is religion. This is a very large definition, I admit. Religion, viewed thus, is in theory a philosophy of life, in practice it is a rule of life. It includes our beliefs, and the principles of our conduct founded upon those beliefs.\(^4\)

Bankim Chandra has tried to give a secular foundation of religion to a mind who has accepted the scientific objections to all phenomena of the supersensible status. Let us quote the words of Bankim Chandra which reflects his search for the secular orientation of the essence of religion:

'I do not profess to make any one follow dharma by raising the fear of other world ... As far as possible, I am excluding the notion of the next world in my discussion on dharma. The reason is that I cannot hope to raise the edifice of religion on the basis of something which does not exist in your mind. Moreover I do not think that the exclusion of future existence will make dharma baseless.',\(^5\)

Hinduism which was believed to be a part of Hindu religion, by the European critics, is not religion at all. It is purely secular. The Hindus never sought to distinguish between religion and other departments of thought and feeling. Consequently the same principles, considerations and the same authorities guided them in their religious and secular life. Here Bankim Chandra writes, “...... To the Hindu, his relations to God and his relations to man, his spiritual life and his temporal life are incapable of being so distinguished...... and religion never received a name from him, because it never had for him an existence apart from all that had received a name”.\(^6\)

Bankim Chandra uses the Sanskrit word ‘Dharma’ as synonym of religion. Dharma (dhr + man) means to hold ........ to hold that Force which is Real i.e. Sat, Chit and Ananda. He starts with the definition of Dharma: The thing by possessing which man becomes man, and by lacking which he cannot be called man, is the dharma of man Dharma is the quality of humanity.\(^7\) In the ‘Devatatwa O Hindu Dharma’, he further writes, “That which makes for the highest development of man ...... a development that is at once physical, mental and social ........... that constitutes religion”.\(^8\)

Tagore too prefers the Sanskrit word ‘Dharma’ for its English equivalent ‘religion’. In the ‘Religion of Man’, Tagore writes that in the Sanskrit language, religion goes by the
name dharma. The derivative meaning of the word ‘Dharma’ implies the principle of relationship that holds us firm, and in its technical sense means the virtue of a thing, the essential quality of it, for instance, heat is the essential quality of fire, though in certain of its stages it may be absent. For Radhakrishnan, “Dharma is an elastic tissue which clothes the growing body. If it is too tight it will give way, and we shall have lawlessness, anarchy and revolution. If it is too loose it will trip us and impede our movements. It should not be too far behind, or too far ahead of, intelligent public opinion”.

This view of Radhakrishnan reminds us the aim of positivism which laid emphasis on the reform of human society. Auguste Comte, also aimed at the reform of society. Saint Simon felt that the reform of human society remained the dream of many French thinkers. These thinkers were fundamentally concerned with the practical questions than the theories of eclectic philosophers. It is true that the political revolution had brought universal happiness. But the ignorance and misery of the lower classes had not been removed by the proclamation of universal human right. It was thus held that the goal could be reached by social evolution, through the gradual reform of society by education and enlightenment.

Bankim Chandra too like the positivists, holds that for practicing dharma we need society. Society is the ground for every progress. Destruction of the society means destruction of dharma. Society has to be preserved above everything. This reminds us of Herbert Spencer’s opinion in this respect. Spencer observed, “The life of the social organism must, as an end, rank above the lives of its units”. Comte has based his religion on this exposition. As he opines, “Religion in itself expresses the state of perfect unity which is the distinctive mark of man’s existence both as an individual and in society, when all the constituent parts of his nature, moral and physical are made habitually to converge to one common purpose”.

According to Comte, though we can eliminate the subjective peculiarities which belong to us as individuals but we cannot rise above the subjectivity which is common to our species as a whole. From this opinion of Comte, it reveals his doctrine of ‘Religion of Humanity’. He has used the expression, ‘Religion of Humanity’, to describe an atheistic doctrine in which abstraction named Humanity was to be worshipped in place of supersensible ‘external God’ worshipped by the followers of Christ.
Bankim Chandra, is theistic as his whole point of religion is dependent on God. The Hindus, as he writes, are men of great devotion. Their system of Culture has been laid at the adored feet of God. (15) In support of his theistic humanism Bankim Chandra further writes, in one of the letters on Hinduism,.... The third answer seeks to reconcile the other two. It grants that there may be a first cause, and it admits Nature and her laws, if not exactly to be self-existent, but what very nearly amounts to the same thing. Granted there is a First Cause, but why should we seek it beyond Nature? Is it impossible that the cause of the universe should be in itself? God, it says, is in Nature; and all phenomena His manifestation. This is pantheism. (16)

According to Bankim Chandra, dharma is the cause of progress. Since science is the cause of progress so it is also a part of dharma. When the scientist claims the glory of science and we utter the name of Hari, both of us speak the same thing. We need not have any quarrel regarding religion of men. (17) Dharma is the means of happiness. It is eternal. It brings happiness for both the world. A liberated person is happy as all his faculties have completely and harmoniously developed. One whose faculties have not been developed cannot be liberated, as he is ignorant, incompetent and gloomy in mind and heart. (18)

Happiness for Bankim Chandra is not a matter of uncultivated sensations as usually supposed to be. The 'proper rule' is to establish harmony amongst all the mental and physical faculties under suitable conditions... through the process of culture, for the attainment of certain end. In Humanity alone, happiness rests. Highest happiness comes from the development of all the faculties, their harmony and their proper satisfaction. All human faculties can be divided into four categories viz. (I) Physical, (2) Knowing, (3) Acting and (4) Aesthetic. The necessary maturity and harmony of all these four kinds of faculty, is Humanity. (19) Knowledge, action and joy are the consequences of these three kinds of faculties .... Sat, Chit and Ananda respectively.

In Plato's educational theory, explained in the Republic we find the principle of Pure Humanism where it is stated and summed up as 'gymnastics as the training of the body, and of music as the training of the mind'. (20) Bankim Chandra's humanism comes very near to Aristotle's Ethical Philosophy. Aristotle is realistically simple in his ethics. For Aristotle like Bankim Chandra, but unlike Plato, the aim of life is not goodness for its
own sake, but happiness. To quote Aristotle (Ethics I, 7)

“For we choose happiness for itself, and never with a view to anything further, whereas we choose honor, pleasure, intellect ...... because we believe that through them we shall be made happy”. (21) The conception of ‘Virtuous man’ elaborated in Aristotle’s “Nicomachean Ethics” is almost identical with Bankim Chandra’s doctrine of Harmony. As Aristotle writes,

“The virtuous man will act often in the interest of his friends and of his country, and if need be, will even die for them .... would rather perform one noble and lofty action than many poor actions. This is true of one who lays down his life for another; he chooses great nobleness for his own”. (22) It is however commented by Bankim Chandra that his culture of harmony is explained in the ‘Bhagavadgita’ which is different from the western culturist like Mathew Arnold. “Dharma rests under the laws of God. Through proper culture or effort all can become a man of dharma. A time will come when all men will be followers of dharma. So long as they have not reached the goal, let them follow the ideal”. (23) This is the view of Bankim Chandra.

The 19th century “doctrine of culture” advocated by thinkers like Mathew Arnold, Seely (in his book Ecce Homo and Natural Religion) had over caste an impression on Bankim Chandra’s reflection on religion. Even for him, the substance of religion is culture. Culture of the human faculties is dharma. The broad feature of the doctrine of culture, said Bankim Chandra, is that all the faculties are to be cultured in their mutual harmony. None of these faculties are to be unduly developed. For him ‘habit and culture’ both are not identical. Culture culminates in happiness, habit develops tolerance. (24)

Bankim Chandra’s approach to study Dharma can be highlighted even from the anthropological standpoint. He is not guided by the traditional conception of Anthropology ......... anthropos for man and logos for study. He is inclined to that range of Anthropological study which incorporates a whole catalogue of disciplines: sociology, psychology, political science, economic, history, human biology and even the humanistic disciplines of philosophy and literature. Cultural Anthropology is one of the broad branches of Anthropology. The Cultural Anthropologists, seek to study culture from three different sub-disciplines. They are Archeology, Anthropological Linguistic and Ethnology. (25)
Ethnology, the study of recent cultures, is often refereed to cultural anthropology. Ethnologists seek to understand how and why people of today and in the recent past differ in their customary ways of thinking and acting. Ethnology is primarily concerned with patterns of thought and behavior, such as marriage customs, kinship organisation, political and economic systems, religion, folk art and music, and with the ways in which these patterns differ in contemporary societies. Ethnologists study the dynamics of culture. Ethnology further studies the relationship between beliefs and practices within a culture. Its subject of inquiry is dependent on observation and interviewing of living people. Bankim Chandra’s ‘study of Culture’ can be studied from the ethnological perspective. Like any other ethnologists, he too, has re-interpreted the customary ways of thinking and acting. Bankim Chandra interprets, ‘Culture has action as its essence’.

Again, Bankim Chandra also differs from the traditional meaning of renunciation. He opines that renunciation, as it is commonly understood may be terrible. While explaining the real import of the doctrine of renunciation given in the Gita, Bankim Chandra opines that action less renunciation is an inferior renunciation. Action has devotion as its soul. Gita teaches that renunciation combined with action, permeated with devotion, is true renunciation. Desire less action is true renunciation. Giving up desire less action is not true renunciation.

Bankim Chandra thus defines devotion as: ‘When the faculties of knowledge search for God, the faculties of action are applied to God, the aesthetic faculties enjoy the beauty of God and physical faculties remain engaged in doing the work of God or carrying out his command, that condition is called devotion. Only he whose knowledge is in God, action is in God, joy is in God, surrender of the body is to God, has acquired devotion to God. Devotion is a single faculty’. Devotion brings liberation. It is a means. Though it brings liberation but the devotee does not desire for liberation. Hence devotion itself is an end.

For Bankim Chandra, kindness comes after devotion and love. Just as culture of devotion is culture of love similarly culture of love is culture of kindness. In Hinduism devotion, love and kindness are strung together by the same thread. These cannot be separated. A religion which is so perfect in all its limbs is not available anywhere else. He
also mentions in 'Dharmatattwa' that all faculties, the first necessity is the culture of the faculties of knowledge to acquire knowledge. Without knowledge one can neither worship nor pray to God. 'There is no worship of God for the uneducated'. (31) All the sinful acts committed by men are uneducated. But mere knowledge of reading and writing cannot make a man wise. It is also evident from his writings that physical faculties depend on the faculties of action which can be cultured only with an adequate development of the faculties of knowledge. Bankim Chandra further asserts that action is an instrument of knowledge and through action knowledge is attained. There can be no purification of the mind without Karma – Yoga. Without the purification of mind one cannot reach the stage of Jnana-Yoga. (32)

Bankim Chandra emphasizes in a specific way the necessity of the culture of aesthetic faculties. According to him poetry is the best means of culturing the aesthetic faculties. 'Dharma Sastras should now make rules about the culture of the aesthetic faculties as much as the faculties of knowledge and of action'. (33) A proper study of perfectly beautiful Hinduism reveals the different stages of the development of Sat-Chit and Ananda. In the Rig Veda there is the substantial portion of Ananda but lack of Sat and Chit. While in the religion of the Upanishads, there is the worship of the Supreme Brahman which is Chit. So there is the lack of Ananda but much stress on knowledge and mediation. In Buddhism there is no worship. Buddhism does not recognise any Sat. So there is no place for Ananda in religion. But the Puranic religion of the Hindus is made up of essence of these three religions. As Bankim Chandra opines "In this (Puranic Religion) there is much worship of Sat, Chit and Ananda. Particularly Ananda has been specially developed in it. This is fit to be the national religion. It is for this reason that this perfectly beautiful Hinduism could not be replaced by any other religion .... God is as much Ananda as much as He is Sat and Chit..." (34)

We can compare Bankim Chandra's views on aesthetic with those of Tagore, who said: "The Logical relationships present in an intellectual proportion, and the aesthetic relationship indicated in the proportions of a work of art : both agree in one thing. They affirm that truth consists on in facts but in the harmony of facts". (35) Tagore's view on art, beauty, creativity which are found in his Aesthetic approach, follow naturally and
spontaneously from his philosophical outlook and his basic ideas about Reality, Knowledge and human nature.

Nothing is outside dharma, declares Bankim Chandra. If dharma is the true means of acquiring happiness then everything should be controlled by dharma. This is the real import of Hinduism. People believes that religion relates only to God and other world. God, man and every other creatures of the world are related to Dharma. To this Bankim Chandra significantly remarked, 'Be pure, purify your mind and adopt dharma in Spirit'.

For Bankim Chandra, Vaishnava dharma as taught by Prahlada is the best of all religions. This is the essence of religion. This exists in all pure religions. Christianity and Brahmaism are included in his Vaishnavism. Whether we call Him God or Allah or Brahman, we call only Visnu who is the lord of this world. He alone is a Vaishnava and a Hindu, who has known the omniscient and blissful Supreme Intelligence as the inner spirit of all the creatures. A person who has no sense distinction or who makes efforts to attain such a condition, is a true Vaishnava and a true Hindu. To quote Bankim Chandra in this respect:

"....... The most perfect religion is that which supplies a basis for the most complete development of culture. It followers from this that no religion which refuses to recognize the highest possible ideal in a perfect personal Being, like the religion of Humanity, can be a perfect religion ...... Hinduism alone contains within it all these elements of worship, ...... Hinduism alone therefore is a perfect religion".\(^{(37)}\) This view of Bankim Chandra reminds us the words of Huston Smith who has also remarked,

"If we are to take Hinduism as a whole ...... its vast literature, its opulent art, its elaborate rituals, its sprawling folk ways ...... if we were to take this enormous outlook in its entirely and epitomize it in a single, central affirmation, we could find it saying to man : You can have what you want".\(^{(38)}\)
4.2 Bankim Chandra’s Concept of God

*God should be the object of all our desires, the end of all actions,*  
*the principle of all our affections, and the governing*  
*power of our whole souls*

Jean Baptiste Massilon

God is fundamentally a religious concept. God is conceived as the ultimate reality from the religious stand point. R. G. Collingwood observes: “If philosophy is the theory of the universe, what is religion? It was the theory and of God’s relations to the world and man but the latter is surely nothing more or less than a view of the universe. Indeed religion is quite as comprehensive as philosophy. For the religious consciousness in its true and complete form nothing is irrelevant, nothing is without its own unique and individual value. ...” (39)

In Hinduism there are two conceptions of God. The Hindus think God who is without any attribute as well as God as possessed with attributes. The Absolute or the Unconditioned is without any attribute (nirguna). The Absolute (nirguna) cannot be an object of worship as He is devoid of attributes. The Absolute, who has no conditions of existence cannot response us. So God with attribute can be worshipped. One who believes in God’s attribute and has devotion to Him can only become worshipper. The ‘Vedanta Sara’ proclaims that Sandilya is the originator of the doctrine of God with attributes. Secondly devotion comes out of the doctrine of God with attributes. (40)

This reminds us of the view of Radhakrishnan. For him the Absolute can be regarded as the Supreme Person or the God of religion. Absolute and God are the same reality from the intellectual and emotional point of view respectively. For him God and Absolute are not two separate entities but as two distinct aspects of the one Supreme Reality. Radhakrishnan could establish the fundamental unity of the Reality without identifying God with the Absolute. God stands as the highest reality but not as mere appearance of the Absolute. God is the highest reality in reference to the world. “The
Supreme in its absolute self-existence”, says Radhakrishnan, “is Brahman, the Absolute and as the Lord and creator containing all and controlling is Isvara, the God” (41).

Bankim Chandra asserts that the knowledge of God is possible ‘from the Hindu Sastras, the Upanishads, Darsana, Puranas, Itihasas and chiefly from the Gita’. (42) He has observed that for the uneducated there is no worship of God. But the application of education amongst the ‘educated class’ resulted in a sense of agony. This gets reflected from the writings of Bankim Chandra when he cites the example of hospitality in Dharmatattwa. As he writes, ‘Our educated classes become furious, in the name of hospitality’. (43) Moreover the spirit of Radhakanta Deb, the illustrious member of the Sabha Bazaar family, in defending Hindu idolatry, spearheaded the attacking attitude by the Brahmos as well as Christian propagandist. W. Hastie has opined that Hindu idolatry was defended on the ground that it is an intellectual necessity for the practical devotion of less cultivated minds. While criticising the idolatry of Hinduism, W. Hastie observes:

If the Christian Missions have done nothing else, they have at least established the universal spirituality of human nature, by the practical demonstration of raising even the most debased savages in a single generation from the grossest idolatry up to the purist worship as God as “as Spirit, in spirit and in truth”. (44)

To this view of W. Hastie, Bankim Chandra has replied that Hindu Idolatry constitutes only a part of Hinduism. It is not the whole field of Hinduism as treated by the Christian missionary. To such a view Bankim Chandra writes, “I must ask the student of Hinduism when he comes to study Hindu Idolatry, to forget the nonsense about dolls given to children …… The true explanation consists in the ever true relations of the subjective Ideal to its objective Reality”. (45) As the Ideal in beauty, in power, in purity finds expression in the world of the Real, so the ideal of the Divine in Man receives a form from him and that form an image. This is the intellectual justification of worship of idols. Further he opines that prior to the ritual of ‘prana pratistha’ i.e. till one starts to worship it, the idols do not possess any sanctity. The image becomes ‘holy’ because one has made a contract with his own heart for the sake of culture and discipline to treat it as God’s image. The immersion of the image thus reflects that the Hindus do not worship stick and stones. He summed up with the assertion: I leave the Kernel without the husk. (46)
Rudolf Otto holds in his ‘Idea of the Holy’, that the essence of religion is numen, a unique original ‘feeling – response’, which is logically indefinable and ethically neutral. It is ‘wholly other’. Its essential feature is the ‘creature-feeling’ ….. the feeling of self-abasement into nothingness before an overpowering, absolute might of some kind. This ‘feeling response’ of Otto, gets reflected in Bankim Chandra’s view of ‘idol worship’. It is because of this ‘feeling response’ one cannot terminate the images of Durga so long as the idol is worshipped. As he says, ‘He could not do this if for a moment he believed it to be his God’. (48)

For Bankim Chandra, the concept of God differs from the God of the Christians. God of the Christian is like the emperor of Germans or of the Russians ….. placed beyond this world creation. Just like the King of Germany or Russia who is different from the common mass similarly Christian God enjoys a separate identity from His own creations. Like a worldly monarch, he lives apart and protects the people, administers the state, punish the wicked and helps the good. To love Him one has to expand his faculty of love in a special ways just in the manner we do for a temporal king. (49)

But the God of the Hindus pervades every creation as being the soul of all creatures. Though the material world is distinct from Him yet this world is in Him alone. Just as the thread in a necklace of pearls, keep them together, similarly the world is in Him. No man is separated from Him. He is in everyone. Self – love involves God’s love. To love God means to love mankind. Bankim Chandra remarks, “So long as I do not realise that all the world is me, there is no difference between the entire world and myself, I possess no knowledge, no religion, no devotion, and no love. Hence love for the world exists at the basis of Hinduism only”. (50)

Dharma follows culture and development of the faculties. One should perform every action for the sake of dharma and not for the sake of acquiring any merit or heaven. The highest achievement of man is to offer everything to God. Every distinctions between man and every other creatures do not exist. This is the dharma preached in the Gita. The
basis of religion, especially of Hinduism is God. He is in all creatures. Hence to do good
to all creatures is dharma. When we direct all the faculties to God, it is the final object of
human existence. If doing good to all creatures is dharma, then dharma consists also of
doing good to others as well as to one’s own self. ‘I am included in all creatures’ As
God is in other creatures, so He is in me also. Hence to protect others is one’s dharma.
Self-love and love for the world is the same. This is the view of Bankim Chandra
Further he asserts that animals are objects of our love as human beings are. Such a sense
of non-distinction exist in no other religion. This exists only in Buddhism which owes its
origin to Hinduism. ([51])

Radhakrishnan also opines that the basic principle of dharma is the realisation of
the dignity of the human spirit as it is the dwelling – place of the Supreme. Dharma is
Freedom through discipline. “The knowledge that the Supreme Spirit dwells in the heart
of every living creature is the abiding root principle of all dharma”. ([52])

According to Bankim Chandra, we can only think of God. As we cannot see Him
so there is no chance of imitating his manners. This is the real import of worshipping
Him. Worship becomes useless when it is performed as a formal affair. Verbal repetition
of ‘Sandhya mantra’ is useless. One can only concentrate one’s mind on His pure nature.
We can only meditate on Him with devotion. One has to turn one’s heart to face Him
with love. We have to make a strong will to build our nature after His ideal, so that the
pure rays of His holy character gets reflected in our own character. Moksha, for the
Aryan rishis meant union and identity with God. It is just submission to the ideal of God
When one attains the identical nature with God, one is freed from sufferings and thus
become the possessor of all happiness. This is the essence of the laws of worship of the
Hindus. This view of Bankim Chandra reminds us the Philosophy of Buddha
Development of enlightenment and service of humanity constitutes the fundamental
teachings of Buddha. These two teachings became the living principles of every religion.
Mere performance of outward rituals never helps us to understand the real significance of
religion. It is the knowledge of the Reality which brings enlightenment in our own nature. Man must think within oneself, concentrates his attention and must try to realise the Reality which is within every expressions. As Buddha declared, "We want mercy, not sacrifice. We want real help and love of humanity." (53) The Universal God of the Bhagavadgita, opines Carl Clemen, demands for himself no prescribed form of worship. All the commandments of morality, along with faith, trust and love toward the divine are the requirements whose fulfillment brings salvation. (54)

For Bankim Chandra, religious History is necessary. We find the true ideal of religious history in the New Testament and in the essential parts of our Puranas. We must exclude the interpolated passages. God the infinite cannot be the ideal of worship for the worshipper in the beginning. But those who are the imitators of God or are considered to be part of God because of their virtues, only those who are thought to be God in human form, they can be our ideals. Henceforth Jesus is the ideal of the Christians and Buddha for the Buddhists. But the dharma promoting ideal which is found in the Hindu Sastras, cannot be found in the other religious scriptures of the world. Bankim Chandra in this respect cites the ideal Krishna who is the embodiment of all virtues. (55) In him we find the culture of every faculties. Thus he has said,

Paritranaya sadhunam vinashaya ca duskratam
Dharma samthagapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge.
Gita 4.8

"I make my descent in all the ages for the protection of the devotees, for the destruction of the evil doers and for the establishment of religion".

To quote Bankim Chandra in this respect, ".......... 'Religion is not in the Vedas, but in the welfare of the people'...... whether he be God or not. I salute him who is Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed and Ramachandra in one, who has all strength and all virtues, is acquainted with dharma, and who is always full of charity, .......... whether he is or is not God.
Namo namaste'stu sahasrakrtuah
punas ca bhuyo' pi namo namas te
Gita 11.39

"Hail to Thee a thousand times, Hail to Thee yet again and again". (56)

We find an emphasis on permanent happiness in the speculative philosophy of Spinoza which also aimed for a practical end. He has endeavored to ‘discover and attain something which would enable him to enjoy supreme, continuous and permanent happiness’. (57) Spinoza's doctrine which is something more a religion than philosophy and not primarily a metaphysics but an ethics, believed that every science must be directed for one purpose and that is ‘supreme human perfection’. He also asserts that this perfection can be reached only through intellectual certainty. To quote him, ‘Those who deny that men can ever attain virtue or truth, by that very denial prevent themselves from attaining it’. (58) This is the subtle difference between Spinoza and Bankim Chandra.

For Bankim Chandra intellectual certainty should be guided by Devotion (Bhakti) for the attainment of ‘Supreme human Perfection’. As he holds that science is also a part of dharma while the leaning of all the faculties to God is devotion. Without devotion there cannot be any humanity. (59) Devotion is meant for one's elevation. It is not simply gratefulness. According to Bankim Chandra, God is the greatest of all the objects which the faculties of men can have. When a faculty follows God its development is always great since God is the embodiment of infinite good, infinite knowledge, infinite dharma, infinite beauty and the infinite as its object. When all the faculties are controlled by devotion true harmony follows. (60)

For Spinoza, God is absolutely infinite substance with thought and extension and other infinite attributes. Individual souls and separate pieces of matter are ‘adjectival’ They are not things but merely aspects of the divine Being. Spinoza holds that all determination is negation. (61) Everything is ruled by an absolute logical necessity. Desires and volition of human beings are treated by him, "more geometrico" as if they are just
lines, planes and solids. There is no room for individual initiative, for movement or for time. God, opines Spinoza, is in the world and the world is in Him. He is the source of everything that is pantheism. There is only one substance: 'God or Nature'.

Unlike Spinoza, Bankim Chandra's God is Personal Pantheistic. As Bankim Chandra observes that God must be conceived as having attributes. Only an atheist can think of God without any attribute. God is the Ideal possessing complete unfolding and highest development of all virtues. Lord of the Vedantas, who is without attributes cannot be our Ideal. So Religion is not fulfilled in the worship of the Lord of Philosophy or science. Religion is not possible for Ekamevadvitiyam of the monist or what Herbert Spencer calls the "Inscrutable Power in Nature". In the Vedic literature Bankim Chandra writes thus, 'The philosophical literature of the Upanishads was easily absorbed into the then existing Vedic Literature as a portion of itself. It respected ritualism, while it sought to interpret the Vedic doctrine of the all informing Paramatma or great soul of the Universe. It forms the connecting link between polymorphous monotheism of the Samhitas, and the polytheistic monotheism of the Puranas. The Puranas never lose sight of the great central idea in Religion that there is only one God'.

In the philosophy of Radhakrishnan we find a similar view. As he comments that we cannot worship the Absolute whom no one has seen or can see. The formless (nirakaram) Absolute is conceived as formed (akaravat) for the purpose of worship. Worship of God is not a false exposure since God is the form in which alone the Absolute can be pictured by the finite mind. The conception of a personal God is the fusion of the highest logical truth with the deepest religious conviction. This personal God is not a non-ethical deity indifferent to man's needs and fears.

Bankim Chandra opines that he who cannot unit with Him through knowledge, has before him the path of devotion. God who has no physical form can be attained only through our inner organ. Only through strong attachment He is attained. Devotion (Bhakti) is the name of this attachment.
According to Seeley the words Religion and worship are commonly and conveniently appropriated to the feelings with which we regard God. But feelings like love, awe, admiration which together make up worship, are felt in various combinations for human beings and even inanimate objects. Religion is always directed towards God. It is however not to be supposed that every higher form of religion should supersede and drive out every lower forms of religion. Feelings of admiration and devotion are of various degrees, and are excited by various objects.

The Vedic religion, Bankim Chandra upholds is devoid of devotion. In the Vedic religion there is a relation between the worshippers and the worshipped. The Vedic people sacrificed everything to gods with the intention to please them. So one has to perform the rites for desired objects (Kamyakarma). But Raja-guhya-yoga which is full of devotion depicts that though God is attainable by everyone, still everyone attains Him the way he thinks about Him. Those who worship God for a desired end enjoy heaven through God's grace. But they do not attain them. Again those whose worship God is desire less, adore God through such worship. So the only means of dharma and of liberation is to be devoted to God after surrendering all actions and desires to God.

Bankim Chandra has also asserted that in the ‘depths’ of philosophy laid the broad and solid foundation of a modern Hinduism. The philosophical conception of the duality of ‘Nature and Soul’ is at the basis formed the religion of the Hindus ……. “the love for all exists”. The conception of the trinity that arises from discriminating in the Universal Soul are the three qualities of love, power and justice. He also opines that the religion of the Hindu’s glorify the union between Krishna and Radha as “Krishna is soul, Radha is Nature”. It is in this union of the soul, with nature lies the source of all beauty, all truth and all love. So love is the bond of the world. Without this love the world is simply a disordered mass-aggregate of everything.
4.3 Bankim Chandra’s Concept of Morality

If men were born free they would, so long
as they remained free, form no conception
of good and evil.

Spinoza.

The term morality has to do with those things that are good and right and with those things that are bad and wrong. Ethics or morality is the feeling of obligation. It recognises imperatives in thought and action. Morality is the sense of obligation which transforms behaviour into conduct. Hollingworth observes that if moral principles are to endure they must be reflectively scrutinised and revised. They must be reformulated accordingly to meet the conditions and characteristics of the age. (69) To such an assertion of Hollingworth we can refer to the claims of the 19th century moralists. These thinkers reformulated morality according to the need of the era. The moralists came to resent the interference of the priests, as theological dogmas became unnecessary burden for ethics. Thinkers like ‘Comte, J. S. Mill and Spencer set up a naturalistic type of ethics independent of religious or transcendental support’ (70)

Bankim Chandra too like the thinkers of the 19th century, tries to dispense with the principles of religion and has demanded autonomy and freedom. As he writes in ‘The Intellectual Superiority of Europe’, that the ethics of the Hindu Religion like other complete codes of morality, regulate the conducts of individuals as well as the society. The Hindu ethical system is a system of ethics as well as polity. The code of personal morality is as beautiful as any other in the world. The social polity is even more wonderful. It is the only system which as succeeded in substituting the government of Moral power in the place of that of Physical power. It is the only system which has abolished war and the military power. Further he always agrees "........ Much of ethical portion is pure ethics, and not religion. The second polity is also non-essential. Caste there, which is the most prominent feature of that polity, is non-essential ......." (71)

For Bankim Chandra Hinduism is always believed to be a part of the Hindu
religion. But it is not religion at all. Hinduism is purely secular. The Hindus never tried to distinguish between religion and other departments of thought and feeling. As a result the same principles, considerations and the same authorities guided the Hindus both in their religious and secular life.

The chief concern of life asserts Bankim Chandra is to attain perfection or completeness …… an ideal that harmonizes wisdom, devotion, love and work. This harmony can never be the result of mere intellection or mediation. He strives to grasp it as a concrete reality so that it can be firmly rooted in actual life. As Mohit Lal Majumdar significantly observes that for Bankim Chandra, “religion was not an abstraction divorced from life, to be imposed on man. He knew that true religion sought to fulfil itself through actual human nature”. (72) Man has certain powers. We call them faculties. These faculties must be cultivated, nurtured and developed to attain full humanity. This is ‘Dharma’ (Virtue) of man. The ultimate end of such cultivation is the harmonization of the faculties and that is happiness. When properly developed these faculties are directed towards God. This is called Devotion. To put in the words of Bankim Chandra, “The real doctrine of the Gita …..speaks of harmony, of knowledge, action and devotion. Hence it can be called the best of the religious books. But the real meaning of this harmony is that the final condition of the three is devotion. Hence the Gita is really a work on the doctrine of devotion”. (73)

For Bankim Chandra the basis of religion, especially Hinduism is God. To do good (virtue) to all is our dharma. As God is in every creatures so He too exists in me. Hence to protect others as well as myself is moral duty (Dharma). Self –Love and love for the world are just one. This reminds us of the sloka from the Vishnu-Purana.

The entire world is an extension of Visnu, who Himself is all. Hence a discerning person should see all as identical with himself. O Daityas, observe an equality everywhere. This (feeling of equality of all creatures with the self) is worship of God. Prahlada’s devotion to Visnu is nothing but a vow to do good to others. (74) When all our faculties develop fully and turn towards God, we feel bhakti (devotion). A heart felt recognition of devotion leads to universal love. But there is no real conflict between universal love, love of one’s self, family and country. To protect one’s family is much greater duty than to protect one’s self. While protecting one’s country is on the other hand a greater duty than
protecting one's family. If it is revealed that transcendental love of God and universal love are one and the same, then we can thus assert that patriotism is man's highest duty than transcendental devotion. (75)

The Bhagavadgita, by demanding that God's worshippers fulfill their duties “better one's own duty ill-done than another's well-performed” (3.35) .... and observe the rules of moral conduct, disinterestedly bridged the chasm between ascetic morality and the search for emancipation, on one hand and the exigencies of daily life, on the other. The Bhagavadgita has given a moral code and a prospect of final liberation for those who want to lead a normal life. In doing so, the work thus founded, on the basis of the Vaisnava tradition, is called a social ethics. (76)

Social morality can reach its ideal only when the individuals not merely loves other as himself but can scarcely be said to have any other or exclusive self to love. Only every few people have realized this absolute merging of the individual in the universal life. For such a man pain and pleasure are words which cease to have any personal significance. It is no longer any pleasure to do what they please. Pain and sacrifice have enriched with a new sense of sweetness. “Morality, or the moral life may be described as the renunciation of the private or exclusive self and the identification of our life with an ever - widening sphere of spiritual life beyond us”. (77)

Morality is possible for a man who is a devotee. Devotion is not pretension to attract crowds. It is steadfastness in conquering one's self. A person whose mind is controlled, who is impartial, engaged in doing good to others, is a devotee. A man whose all faculties of knowledge are not directed towards God is not a devotee. As Bankim Chandra writes that it is ignorance that prevents us to know God. It is ignorance that also makes us forget devotion and love. So for the proper culture of the faculties of devotion and love, we must culture the faculties of knowledge. (78) He also opines that Lord Krishna makes the significant remark about knowledge in the Bhagavadgita. As Krishna opines that knowledge is that with which man can see all creatures in the atman (human soul) and in God. So accordingly says Bankim Chandra that all our knowledge must be properly developed and matured. Such development and maturity do not come about without acquiring all kinds of knowledge. When the faculties of knowledge in conformity with the faculty of devotion are properly developed and matured then only these faculties
lean towards God under the influence of devotion.

Bankim Chandra explains that we can surrender our actions to God only when we can understand the expressions of the passage ....... “with a discriminating mind” and “being desire less”. Sankara also writes in his explanation of adhyatma – chetasa “with a discriminating mind”\(^{(9)}\) For him if culture of all faculties is dharma then culture of physical faculties is also included in dharma. Culture of physical faculties is necessary to perform every religious and moral activities. If we consider acts related to sacrifices and vratas or to charity, liberating or doing good to others to be dharma, the culture of physical faculties are most necessary. To quote him “..... Even for him who does not consider all these things necessary for dharma, and believes that dharma consists only of meditating on God, will meet a hindrance in illness. For a man suffering from illness cannot fix his mind in God, ...... Illness is a hindrance to a man of work, to the Yogi in his Yoga and to the devotees in practice of devotion. Illness is the greatest hindrance to dharma”.\(^{(80)}\) As an example to this he cites the character of Krishna whom we know as possessing all qualities of God and nothing more than that.

We know Krishna as either of Jayadeva or the Krishna of festivals. But the Krishna whose physical faculties are fully unfolded, mental faculties are equally developed and transformed into wisdom beyond all men and faculty of love which made him devoted to the well being of all men.\(^{(81)}\) That ideal Krishna is not well known to us.

So Bankim Chandra concentrates on conduct and not on doctrinaire theology (as the Brahmos had done). He asserts that conduct is conducive to ‘lasting happiness’. It is the ‘balance’ of all the faculties that constitute the perfection of ‘manhood’. “Dharma is in the improvement of human faculties”.\(^{(82)}\) Through proper cultivation the child can achieve true Humanity. The child can become a man possessing all ‘virtues’ and all happiness. This is human development.

To this view of Bankim Chandra’s ‘Humanity’, we can refer to the observation of Mohit lal Majumdar. Mohit lal Majumdar very aptly writes ‘This religion should be rightly called a Religion of Humanity, and hence exercise of the faculties is the essence of this religion. Bankim Chandra has adopted as his guiding principle the great Western thinker’s statement that the substance of religion is culture’.\(^{(83)}\) But to this observation of Mohit lal Majumder we can further assert that for Bankim Chandra, culture is not western. It is
the essence of Hinduism. The holiest and most ambrosial dharma which has been explained in the Bhagavadgita, is based on this system of culture.

According to Herbert Spencer biology is the foundation on which morality depends. He has made a significant point in saying that the new morality must be built upon biology. "Acceptance of the doctrine of organic evolution determines certain ethical conceptions". (84) Spencer feels that a moral code which cannot meet the test of nature selection and the struggle for existence, is from the beginning failed to arouse a sense of service and futility. Conduct, like anything else must be called good or bad as it is well adapted or maladapted, till the ends of life. As he says, "The highest conduct is that which conduces to the greatest length, breadth, and completeness of life". (85) Spencer illustrates conduct as moral in terms of the evolution formula .... as it makes the individual or the group more integrated and coherent in the midst of a heterogeneity of ends. He admits that "Morality, like art, is the achievement of unity in diversity. the highest type of man is he who effectively unites in himself the widest variety, complexity, and completeness of life". (86)

Idealist philosophers since the time of Kant have emphasized on reason and intellectual consistency as the ultimate authority in moral affairs. According to Kant, religion is morality. As he opines, "God became simply a name for the categorical imperative itself or a name for a purely subjective projection of a voice speaking through the moral law". (87) But in Herbert Spencer's Ethics we find 'the Category of Safety' predominates. To understand the real meaning of moral conduct, says Spencer, that we must comprehend conduct as a whole i.e. the conduct of all living creatures and the evolution of conduct. We must examine it in its physical, biological, psychological and social aspects. He makes the declaration that "those acts are good which are adapted to preserve life in its fullest form, for self, progeny, and fellow citizens". (88)

In Bankim Chandra's thought too the 'Category of Safety' predominates like Herbert Spencer. But Bankim Chandra while negating materialism takes the pain of proclaiming Bhakti, as explained in the Gita, as a 'balancing' in the anusilan (culture) of
human faculties. As he asserts, “Self protection, protection of country, protection from the
oppression of others, efforts to raise the depressed … all these are actions sanction by
God, and therefore are actions which ought to be performed. Hence one should,
dispassionately save oneself, one’s country, one’s oppressed country men and should work
for the advancement of the people of one’s country”. (89)

According to Bankim Chandra, in the Christian conception “Do unto others as
you would have them do unto you”, the good of others is not given supremacy. Here the
good of others and one’s own good are made equal. Though he claims that sometimes
circumstance demands supremacy to the welfare of others. But to the question when one’s
own good and another’s good are mutually opposed to each other, then whose good has to
be actualised. To this question Bankim Chandra puts forward three solutions.

The first solution to this problem is that to do any harm to others is adharma. This
is the essence of Hinduism. Christianity, Buddhism and other religions. This is the opinion
of modern philosophers and moralists. This is the first rule in the philosophy of self
love.

Utilitarianism which is also part of dharma is the second rule. The second rule is
an extension and definition of the first. Dharma is in devotion which is another name for
sense of equality. Utilitarianism is a very small current among the thousands of streams
which descend from that great peak. It may be small … but its water is pure. To
Bankim Chandra the principle of “Greatest good of the greatest number is only a
mathematical formula in relation to the doctrine of culture”. (90) One can ask whether
welfare can be measured, Bankim Chandra explains that only the philosophy of ‘doctrine
of culture’, is the best possible reply to such an inquiry. The error of the utilitarianism is
that they have considered all the theory of dharma to be within this idea of utilitarianism

The Third rule follows that often the welfare of others is not under our control as
good of our own self. As Bankim Chandra cites the example in this context, “we can
improve the mind of others as easily as we can do ours. In this case one must improve
one’s mind first. For, chance of success is greater here. Moreover in many cases, good to
others cannot be done before doing good to one’s own self ....... Before improving my own mind I cannot improve yours”.

Even Bentham who has advocated the individualistically oriented hedonism never ignored the happiness of others. According to him ethics and legislation must consider the interest of society or the community of individuals. Bentham offers his own principle of utility, “that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question”. He further opines that “by utility is meant the property of any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness or to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered”.

To Comte social problem is a moral problem. He believes that positivistic society is possible only when there will be change in affirms. “The great human problem is to subordinate, as far as possible, personality to sociability everything must be related to humanity, love is the central impulse, to live for others the absolute demand. Humanity is the Great Being worthy of worship”. This is the central tenet of the positivistic ‘religion of humanity’.

Unlike Comte, Bankim Chandra is a theist but believes that supra - mundane consciousness is not religion. Consequently he strives to establish the natural foundation of the Hindu religion with the spirit of the post – Darwinian rationalism of the 19th century Europe. This natural basis ultimately leads him to the Humanistic pursuits of happiness which rests on the there pillars viz.: bhakti to God, love to humanity and peace in heart. These in their complete development constitutes the ‘whole virtue of man’ in his humanness. This can alone strive for ‘lasting happiness’....

This atman is indeed all. He who seeing this, thinking of this, knowing this. gets attached to the atman, becomes sportful in atman, to whom the atman is the second (a companion) to whom atman is joy, he is swaraj i.e. is delighted with himself.
4.4 Bankim Chandra’s Concept of Religion and Society

Religion is intimately connected with society. Though thinkers agree amongst themselves regarding the relation between religion and society, there is a difference of opinion among them about the nature or type of their relation. Some think that though religion contributes to social integration yet it has its own intrinsic value. As Allport comments, "The social scientist argues that the function of religion is to produce social stability. Yet no individual. I venture to assert, is religious for any such reason. Indeed, most people would discard their religion, if they thought it was merely a device to keep them out of the hands of the police and out of their neighbour’s hands". (96)

While others think that there is a close similarity between man’s approach to godhead and social collectivity. Some of our social relations involves different feelings like selfless devotion and love, humility and elation. These social bonds are also found associated in man’s relations to higher powers. Several others observe that different social groups show a kind of unity which is conducive to religious development and again religious development exercises a cohesive force with a group. Further we can assert that spirituality is the mark and criterion of every religion. When spirituality is lost, religion nevertheless becomes a mere activity of man, but it can never guide human activity. Hence when the edifice of religion is ‘Spiritual’, it can give freedom and perfection to Philosophy, Science, Art, Social and Political activities and to every potentialities of human life. To such a view it can be opined that religion is the integrating factor in the society. It is the cohesive force in the society. The Sociologists have appealed to such a function of religion in coherence to the social order. Broom and Selzuck aptly remarked: “From the standpoint of its role in society, one of the great potential capabilities.
of religion is the promotion of group cohesion". In the 19th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson said that within man is the soul of the holy. This view is akin to the French sociologist Émile Durkheim who has opined that the sacred is but a personified society. So there are different explanations which are concerned with the mutual influences of religion and society. But here we shall not make an elaborate explanation in this respect. Let us involve in the explanation of Bankim Chandra’s regarding the relation between religion and society.

Bankim Chandra always agrees an intimate relation between religion and society. He upholds that the meaning of dharma from the Indian context is derived from the root dhr (to hold). That which holds men together in society is called dharma. Dharma is a synonym of the word religion which is derived from the Latin words ‘re’ and ‘ligare’, which mean to bind back. In Christian world it means that which binds human being to each other in the bonds of love and sympathy, mutual rights and duties. It binds them all also to God. Dharma is the same as Truth. Truth and Justice are co-related. When one speaks the truth, he speaks justly. Moral good is identified with Dharma which is explained as the principle of social justice grounded in Truth. The word dharma corresponds to the Greek conception of justice or diké. There is a similarity between the Platonic explanation of justice and the conception of dharma as the just social order correlates human classes based on aptitude and functions. For practicing dharma we need society otherwise there cannot be any progress. Without progress in knowledge there cannot be any sense of dharma or adharma. Society is necessary for dharma. The principal value of Hindu Philosophy consists in its bearings on history and on sociology. For Bankim Chandra, “religion is a philosophy of life in theory, and in practice principles of conduct in harmony with that philosophy. If Hinduism is a religion, we should expect to find it to consist of such a philosophy and such principles of conduct. The theoretical or philosophical religion is found in all cases to consist of a body of received doctrines, and the principles of practical conduct find expression in a system of worship or rites and a code of religious morality”. Hinduism consists of certain fundamental principles which constitute a religion. These fundamental principles consist of a body of doctrines which constitute the theoretical belief of the Hindu, as well as the elementary basis of one’s practical life. The principles which form the basis of practical life, came to be applied as Hindu society developed itself to the large problems of social existence. Thus came into existence a Hindu system of
ethics. Hindu systems of philosophy, Hindu systems of law, and a complicated social polity

Dharma regulates everyone's duty. It is the law that underlies Nature as well as Society. There is nothing higher than Dharma

Bankim Chandra's view of Dharma is akin to Radhakrishnan's concept of Dharma. Radhakrishnan opines that by the word 'Dharma' the Hindu brings forth the forms and activities which shape and sustain human life. We have in our life diverse interests, various desires, conflicting needs which grow and change gradually. To round them all into a whole is the purpose of dharma. Man is a whole and so all his activities have an overarching unity. Different activities of man react upon and modify one another. When life is one, then there is one science of life which recognizes the four supreme ends of dharma or righteousness, artha or wealth, kama or artistic and cultural life and moksa or spiritual freedom. The Hindu code of practice links up the realm of desires with the perspective of the eternal. It binds together the kingdom of earth and heaven.

To Bankim Chandra society deserves devotion. All qualities of men are inherent in the society. The society is our teacher, maker of laws, provider of livelihood and protection. Dharma follows culture and development of the faculties. One should sacrifice for the sake of dharma and not for acquiring any merit or heaven. God is within all creatures. Hence one is to give to all creatures. We must give to God what belongs to God. The highest achievement of man is to offer everything to God. There exists no distinction between 'me and other creatures'. Hence all men have a right to everything belong to others. We are to give to all men what belongs to them by right. This 'principle of giving' is the central thesis preached in the Gita. This is the 'Dharma of giving'. Otherwise our giving of something from many things that we possess is not real giving. The result of Dharma can never be sorrow. Like the result of happiness, so also with Dharma. To quote Bankim Chandra, "The result of dharma is happiness in this world and so in the next one, if such exists, Dharma is the only means of attaining happiness. There is no other means whether in this world or in the next one".

Inequality is a law of the world. There pervades inequality in all the things in the universe. There are natural inequalities as well as unnatural inequalities according to Bankim Chandra. The inequalities that exist between different men are natural as this difference arise from natural law. There is another unnatural inequality. That inequality which exists between natives and foreigners. Thus he observes that among all the causes of the obstruction of social
progress, or of social degradation, an excess of unnatural inequalities is the most important. The specific cause of India’s longstanding miserable condition is the excess of social inequalities. To cure this dark curse of inequality three great pure souls were born on three different occasions to spread welfare in the society. According to Bankim Chandra, The Kernel of their significant teaching is: “All men are equal”. With the spread of this thought, they sowed the seeds of civilization and progress in the world. When in a miserable condition men had taken the path of degradation, then a great soul said: “You are all equal………….. treat each other as equals”. Then the miserable condition was dispelled, and good conditions were established once again.

The first avatar to spread the lesson of equality in the Indian soil was Buddha. He declared in a trumpet voice; “I will rescue you. I give you the teaching which is the seed of your deliverance: follow this teaching. You are all equal. Brahmin and Sudras are equal. All men are equal. All are sinful, and the deliverance all live in right conduct. Caste inequality is false. Sacrifices are false. The Vedas are false, the sutras are false, worldly happiness is false. whether a person is king or subject is false. Dharma is truth. Renounce falsity, and uphold. all of you, the true Dharma”.

The second rising star to preach the great lesson of inequality was Jesus Christ. His great message uttered by Christ pierced and entered men’s hearts. All men are equal before God and are thus brother to one another. Christ said, “My kingdom is not in this world. Worldly happiness is not happiness ……. worldly importance is not importance”. Buddha and Jesus Christ have spread pure words of truth in the world. As a result they are worshipped as gods by mankind.

The third avatar to proclaim the philosophy of equality was Rousseau. His basic idea is that equality is a natural law. In their natural state, all men are equal. Civilization for Rousseau is a great misfortune for mankind as from it resulted every inequalities. In France serious inequality developed between the upper and lower classes, which resulted in the great French Revolution. Rousseau did not spread words of unmixed stainless truth in the world. “He mixed glorious, eternal truth, conducive to the welfare of mankind, with harmful lies, and, imbuing this mixture with the power of captivating people by virtue of his own wonderful skill with words, gave it mastery over the hearts of the French”. Rousseau was a true magician with words. The truths he transmitted were all accepted by the people of French as their fundamental
principle for life. Every French men become his spiritual disciples. French Revolution is the consequence of that teaching.

Bankim Chandra once again takes the pain of explaining the basic idea of philosophy of equality. All men are equal, he holds in high esteem but he does not mean that all are equal in all circumstances. There are certain natural inequalities, for some are weak, while others are strong. Some again are intelligent and others are not so. Social differences that arises are the inevitable consequence of natural differences. He opines that he who is intelligent is a giver of orders and he who is stupid and weak must carry out orders. Rousseau too accepted this rule of natural law. The true meaning of philosophy of equality is that social differences result from natural differences. But inequality which follows from other reasons is unjust and harmful to mankind. Hence the political and social arrangements which are the causes of unnatural inequalities must be reformed. Otherwise there will be no true progress of mankind.

Bankim Chandra here refers to Mill who has commented that “the good systems which now exist are merely transformation of old, bad systems”. Bankim Chandra too regards this to be true but thorough reformation demands time. Therefore let nobody think he writes, “I am a great man by virtue of my birth, that other is a small man because of his birth”. So the man of a low – ranking family has the same right as the other to the pleasures of this world. We must not create obstacle to his happiness. He too is our brother our equal. He who sees all creatures as his equals and never distinguish between his own self and others can give to others as much as he eats as his own food. This is dharma. To give to others and to fast is not dharma because we must consider us as well as others as equal.

To this view Bankim Chandra further asserts that the basis of religion, especially of Hinduism is God. The basis of all principles of the Hindus is the supreme spirit and the supreme truth. There is nothing apart from religion. He agrees that if religion is the true means to happiness, then every aspects of human life should be governed by religion. This is the true essence of Hinduism. This philosophy is not present in other religion. Hence other religions are incomplete. Hinduism is a complete religion. It is the belief of other people that the word of religion is God and life after death. But for the Hindu, religion concerns this life. God man, all creatures and all the world. To this Bankim Chandra ask the question, “Is there another such all – encompassing, all happiness-producing and holy religion?”
In Hinduism devotion and love are not distinct and cannot be separated. Devotion, love and kindness are strung together by the same thread. A religion which is so perfect in all its aspects is not available anywhere else. Culture of kindness means giving. ‘Giving and Renunciation’ are synonymous. Renunciation has been used in many places in relation to the culture of kindness. Devotion is not gratefulness. It is the best human faculties. Often we are to show our gratefulness to one who is inferior to us. Devotion is meant for one’s elevation. A person who lacks devotion cannot elevate his character. In absence of devotion to the teachers of the world, there cannot be any education. Education is at the root of all kinds of progress. Therefore it is dharma to culture devotion to the teachers of the society. “Devotion is a principal constituent of Hinduism and the Hindu Sastra. Now devotion has entirely disappeared from the educated and the semi-educated men ......... Devotion which is the best of human faculties is considered to be sign of men’s inferiority”. (114)

Utilitarianism is dharma and not opposed to dharma. As Dharma is in devotion, so Bankim Chandra observes that it is another name for sense of equality. As he said, that utilitarianism is one of the smallest among the many thousands of streams that have flowed down from that high peak which is devotion and sense of equality of all creatures. Though it is the smallest stream, its water is pure. (115) The social utility of devotion has two - fold values. Bankim Chandra writes, ‘That without devotion the inferior cannot follow the superior and the inferior not following the superior, social solidarity is lost. Due to lack of solidarity of the members, the society can never progress’. (116)

Bankim Chandra is of the opinion that people’s character is formed by the popular religion. Even he who does not understand the popular religion is guided by this religion. Only very few men understand this hidden import of religion. National character is formed and controlled by an imitation of those few persons who understand it. Even our festivals which were probably in their origin, festivals merely in honour of the respective seasons, had no necessary connection with religion. With the advent of time these festivals gradually have become our religious festivals. Bankim Chandra remarks, “.......... it is my belief that most of the festivals and usages connected with them, at all events all the older festivals, had in their
origin older festivals, had in their origin no necessary connection with religion, and their present religious character is owing to the latter Puranic superstition.\textsuperscript{117}

Society which is the most comprehensive operative ground for every civilization. It is love which binds together every mutually hostile people of a society. Without this love the world becomes a disintegrated inert masses. Just as the world is strung together by God, the world is equally held together by love. God Himself is love and God Himself is devotion for self – protection and protection of society, anger is never eradicated. The laws of punishment are codified by social anger. If the laws of punishment are eradicated, society can never survive. Bankim Chandra in this context refers to the teachings of Krishna in the Gita which does not prescribe annihilation of the senses, but their control. When controlled they can no longer be detrimental to peace.

"A person who is free from love and hatred and who has his body under control, gains a composure of mind while he enjoys the objects through keeping his senses under his control".\textsuperscript{118}

This view of Bankim Chandra comes very near to Radhakrishnan. According to Radhakrishnan social growth is a continually evolving creative process. It demands both perfect love and concrete situation of our activities. Perfect non-violence is undoubtedly the ideal. In the world which is ruled by love and justice, there is no need for the use of force.\textsuperscript{119}

Destruction of the society means destruction of dharma. Destruction of all well being of men and the society should be preserved before everything. Bankim Chandra here quotes the word of Herbert Spencer, "The life of the social organism must, as an end, rank above the lives of its units".\textsuperscript{120} So Defense of the country is a higher dharma than self – preservation. It is for this reason that many thousands of person have tried to defend their own country even at the sacrifice of their own lives. This is where Bankim Chandra leaves materialism behind and goes forward to produce a theistic philosophy based on the ‘Bhakti’ ....... the non-rational religious philosophy. Faith in a God complete with qualities is the main thesis of the manava dharma as conceived by him:

Defense of one’s own country is an action directed to God as much as self – preservation.
and preservation of the near and dear ones. For the well being of all creatures, everyone must defend one’s own country. If the defense of one’s own country is an action directed to God, then this also can be directed to desire less action. (121)

Hence Bankim Chandra holds that Patriotism under special circumstances can be called the highest religion. Hinduism he concludes is not the exclusive property of the Bengalis but belongs to all Hindus in India. The prominent note which is well cited in his writings is his love for his country, especially the nationalism in Bengal. But it never made him a narrow-minded patriotic. He easily accepted the best in the culture of the west with the same amount of enthusiasm for the native. But he never favoured anarchical and revolutionary methods. In the preface of ‘Anandamath’, he writes, ‘Revolutions are very general processes of self-torture and rebels are suicides’. From Durgesnandini, we can refer to such a view: To go against the ruler is a great sin, ‘was his opinion’ (Part I, Chap. V) Politics for Bankim Chandra, is concerned with elevation of mankind. It is possible only when one understands the ethics of the Gita. (122) In Anandamath, Rajsimha and Sitaram, his fundamental purpose is to preach the gospel of patriotism. The most eloquent feeling in these novels is his intense respect for Hinduism.

In Hinduism we find the various religious faith of the modern Hindus as it is consisting of the fundamental principles of life. Hinduism is protean in its form. It recognises human nature. Inspite of all the diversities, exists a common basis for all which is Hindu Religion. So there is says Bankim Chandra that a monotheistic Hinduism, a dualistic Hinduism, a polytheistic Hinduism, a pantheistic Hinduism. With Buddhism as included in Hindu religions, there is atheistic Hinduism. There is ritualistic, non-ritualistic, asceticism, gross sensuality and humane Hinduism of the Vaishnavas. There is the cruel and blood thirsty Hinduism of certain Saivas and Saktas as well as the liberal and sympathetic Hinduism of Kabir, Chaitanya. We find also the illiberal and bigoted expression Hinduism in some of the ordinances of Manu. Inspite of all these diversities there is a common basis for all; certain fundamental principles which alone is Hindu Religion. (123)
4.5 Bankim Chandra's ‘Krishna – Charitra’

Obeisance to that knowable (worth-knowing) soul
knowing which Super luminous embodiment at
the end of deep darkness, Death is surmounted

Mahabharata, Santiparba, 47 Adhya

The fundamental intention of Bankim Chandra in Krishna-Charitra is to establish the basic trait of the character of Krishna. Krishna may or may not be an incarnation of Vishnu, but he has tried to make it clear the humanity of Krishna and not his godliness. Krishna has not been referred to as Vishnu anywhere in the Mahabharat. No body of the first order, addressed him as Vishnu, or talked with him considering to be Vishnu. But later on it is due to interpolations and effect of the writers of the second-order in Mahabharat, Krishna has been addressed as Vishnu. Again many are seen worshipping him as Vishnu too. Sometimes we also see him performing deeds with supernatural Vaishnabee powers. To this view Bankim Chandra writes, “We wish to critically analyse his human nature; which is revealed through his human capabilities; so we will only search for the activities performed by Krishna”(124) Furthermore in the books like Harivamsa, in the Bhagavata or in other Puranas, depiction of ‘the character of Krishna’ is available which differs very widely than the Mahabharata. Amongst all these books, the Mahabharata is the foremost. But the question arises, ‘Can it be relied upon’? For Bankim Chandra of all the ancient books of India, only the Mahabharata and the Ramayana have been termed as ‘histories’. (125) It has transpired so because of its special historical values.

According to Bankim Chandra, we find two objectives in the life of Krishna (1) to establish a kingdom based on religious principles and (2) to preach religion. Krishna tried at every step to establish a kingdom based on dharma with Yudhisthir at the centre. This has been found elaborately discussed in the Mahabharata. Again his religious preachings are contained in the section contained in the Gita in the Bhisma Parba. Krishna while reacting against Vedic religion once said to Sanjay, “Just as a person cannot have satisfaction unless he eats food, so only the knowledge of the Vedas without any performance of work, does not help in achieving salvation. The knowledge which help in the performance of work, that alone
yield result; where there is no direction for doing any work, that knowledge is useless” (127).

In ‘Krishna Charitra’, Bankim Chandra makes a hair splitting analysis to the question, ‘Whether incarnation is feasible?’ Though the second question which arises ....... If so, whether Krishna is an incarnation, to which Bankim Chandra makes no attempt to reply it. For the Christian preceptor we do not have any serious conflict, for they believe in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Our main conflicts are with the philosophers and the scientists. Many of them hold that when the very existence of God is suspected where is the necessity of incarnation. To these groups we may not hold any arguments for it will not benefit any one side. There are again who admit the existence of God but tend to deprive Him of His attributes. Since God is without any attributes his incarnation is not possible. Incarnation is possible for those who possess attributes. To this Bankim Chandra significantly remarks, “The allegation must be answered in a straight manner, the concept of God without attributes is incomprehensible to me and as such I am in no position to determine its authenticity. I know of a number of scholars and thinkers who consider God as Being without the attributes. I am neither a scholar nor a thinker, but I am convinced that they are, like me, unable to comprehend the idea of such God, for no mortal does possess such faculty of mind with which to understand God’s attributes…….” (127)

Even those who agree with the existence of God with attributes may object to His incarnation. One such objection is that though God is with attributes but formless. Hence it cannot assume any definite shape.

In reply to this view, it is said that if He can mould the inanimate world into a definite shape why cannot he mould Himself then? Is He not omnipotent then?

Those who do not raise any such objection even hold against the human incarnation of the Omnipotent, the ruler of the universe. According to them it is disrespect for God to suffer the endless sorrows and pains just as a mortal does.

Those who support this objection feel that God is like the mortal being. But they fail to realise that God is beyond all sufferings. Just as the creation, preservation and annihilation of the universe are his manifestations, experiencing the human sufferings may also be one of his manifold manifestations.

Bankim Chandra reveals, that God has established certain unwavering rules which make the earth function in the manner as it is. But he fails to understand why God has nothing
else to do for Himself simply because He has already formed these laws. Nothing in this earth is so perfect that God may not improve upon it even if He wants to do. We have not reached the highest stage of development. Then there is every possibility that God ensures for better amelioration through incarnation of Himself. Bankim Chandra in this context opines that there are many instances where the incarnated God performed certain works with the help of the supernatural force. Jesus Christ provides a perfect example. Moreover Bankim Chandra convincingly proves that the saga of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu is comparatively modern. Consequently there are more fictions than reality. According to him in real terms of the word none but Krishna can be acknowledged as an incarnation of God. It is the Brahmans who make Krishna to adopt supernatural means to fulfil his task. He thus writes in 'Krishna Charitra', "I shall presently explain my stand and shall also substantiate my claim that Krishna did not accomplish anything through supernatural means or by violating the natural laws."

To Bankim Chandra, the basic concept of Vaishnavism is based on the Vedantic theism. Lord Vishnu and his human incarnation Krishna are Vedantic gods. The hymns on Vishnu or Krishna as contained in Vishnupurana, Bhagabat or any other such books are wholly or partially monotheistic. But Advaitavada and Daitavada may be of different forms as commented by Bankim Chandra. In modern time, Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya and Vallabhacharya have critically analysed and propagated four different types of Advaitavada. Consequently we have Advaitavada, Vishistadvaita, Dualistic monism and Perfect monism. In ancient time there were not so many in variety. Two theories regarding 'God and his created objects' existed. The first theory advocates that the only reality in this world is God. The second theory upholds that neither God nor the world complements each other, but the world is made of God. God is all-pervading and beyond this world. The ancient cult of Vaishnavism is dependent on the second theory. (129)

The Sankhya system of philosophy is the second important branch of philosophy. The Sankhya system propounded by Kapila does not admit the existence of God. But the later treatises accepts God's presence. The basic concept of the Sankhya philosophy is that the material world is totally different from the one conceived by the Supreme Purusa. 'Paratma' or Purusa is devoid of any company. They have given the name 'Prakriti' for this material world. It is Prakriti which creates, protects and destroys everything on this earth. From this 'Prakriti-Purusa theory' the dominating Prakriti 'Tantric Dharma' has been evolved. Being
dissatisfied with 'Advaitavada' advocated by the Vaishnavas, a section of people took recourse to the Trantric philosophy. In this reference Bankim Chandra observes, 'Though the canto Brahmakhandha, shows that Krishna, after having first created the essence Prakriti, created Radha, yet the Chapter 'Sri krishnajanma' shows that Krishna himself is addressing Radha repeatedly as the essence Prakriti. {\textsuperscript{130}}

These interpretations do not exactly suit with the Prakritivada of the Sankhya Philosophy. The difference between 'Prakritivada' and the 'Shakti-vada' is this that the Prakriti is completely separated from the Purusa. To illustrate the relationship between the two, the Sankhya discourse has drawn the simile of the china rose’s shadow falling on to the crystal bowl. The crystal bowl and the china rose are two absolutely dissimilar objects. But they are related to each other in that the flower’s shadow falls on the bowl. “This concept of Shakti-vada is only present in the Trantric philosophy, is not the case. Even the composers of the Vishnu Puranas used this concept of Sankhya’s Prakriti to illustrate this phenomenon to suit their purpose”. {\textsuperscript{131}}

According to Bankim Chandra, the Maya-vada of Vedanta is the Prakriti-vada of Sankhya Philosophy. Perhaps remembering this the composer of Brahmavaivarta writes that Krishna is relating to Radha that ‘If you do not exist .......... I am Krishna, and If you exist, I am Shree Krishna’. The Vishnu Purana reveals that this Shree itself constitute Shree Krishna. Exactly the same principle is highlighted about Radha in the Brahmabaibarta. So Radha is that Shree. To quote Bankim Chandra, “.......... Radha is the Shakti (power) of God, the two got married according to the prevalent custom, lively expression of power of the powerful and the revelation of the power is the amorous sport of both”. {\textsuperscript{132}}

To Bankim Chandra, Krishna, in spite of being an incarnation, is possessed with human characteristic and acts in the manner of a mortal. When any one tries to execute a job must at first perfect the art of doing that through strenuous process of learning. In ancient times, the pursuits of higher education by the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas were known as penance. Penance in those days was not what we mean by the term today. To use penance is meditation of God through self mortification. It is also said that the Supreme God, being desirous of procreating the world, first went through a long and hard penance. He then restated to the act of creation. “He wished to become many for the purpose of creating life. So, he first went through penance and later procreated life”. {\textsuperscript{133}}
Krishna has never favoured the slaying of others unless it is for a just cause. In many instances, war conform to virtue. Abstaining from war in such a situation amounts to impiety. ‘In the Gita, Krishna has expressed this view’. (134) For Bankim Chandra, Krishna is very skill in the art of warfare. He is also versatile politician and is against unnecessary loss of human life. Every faculties of an ideal figure are being gradually manifested in him. He opines that Krishna becomes the chief among all by his virtues of wisdom, religious principles and physical prowess. He cultivated all his faculties to perfection which resulted in his dominance over all. Unless all the faculties are properly cultivated, they cannot yield the desired result. With this character of Krishna the doctrine of religion (Dharmatattwa) becomes understandable. Further, he asserts, ‘Krishna is the ideal man ............ He did never indulge in wars for a cause that could be amicably settled. Nowhere in the Mahabharata do we find Krishna engaged in warfare for a cause other than maintaining the sanctity of religion’. (135) 

Bankim Chandra emphasizes that people like Kashiram Das, (i.e. whose knowledge of the Mahabharata is limited) believes that Krishna is the investigator of all wars. Krishna never incited others to engage in warfare for a wrong cause, nor did he himself do any such thing. As he makes the significant remark, “The surprising thing is that, the person who behaved in this self-less manner, who made helping all people who were distressed, the chief objective of his life, that Krishna was made to look like a doer of evil deeds, a cruel person with evil intentions and a sinner, by the fools of the West and their followers”. (136) This happens when there lacks the ability to judge and analyse historical facts. The person who is an ‘ideal man’ is likely to have his emotion of love. Like all his other faculties, the faculty of love is fully developed and perfected.

Sri Krishna has no power to perform miracles. Moreover he cannot do things what is not possible for a man. In the Mahabharata, where Krishna has been portrayed as a person having miraculous powers, are interpolations. Bankim Chandra only wishes to say that Krishna never called himself God in any place. With great care he performs activities which are possible for man. The person who thinks that he will get recognition as god, he tries to behave in a superhuman manner. But we do not find such thing in Krishna. To strengthen his view Bankim Chandra quotes Krishna, “I can show my ability to perform human activities, but I have no power to perform miracles”. (137)
"O Son of Brihadrath! We shall also become sinners by your commitment of sin, because we are virtuous and have the ability to save and protect our virtues!"

In these words, we find the 'alpha and omega' of Krishna's abilities in re-establishing of Dharma once again in the midst of every crisis. In this world it is unvirtuous not to restrain or punish sin as far as possible for a person. Any person who sits idle from performing such virtuous deed is also a sinner. For every great men protection of virtues, control of sin become the chief objectives of their life. The best cited illustration of such life, according to Bankim Chandra, are Sakyasingha and Jesus Christ. Similarly the objective of life of Sri Krishna is also the same. If we do not keep this great truth in our mind, our understanding of the live and character of Sri Krishna will be a far cry. Whether it is by Christ or by the Buddha or by Krishna, this vow of relieving the world of sin, its restraint, should be known as the 'preaching of a religion'.

Bankim Chandra comments that Krishna like Christ had the possibility to bring Kangsa and Jarasandha to the path of virtue and religion. But both of them denied to follow the Kshatriya dharma. Instead of killing him we cannot think of any other possibilities to bring Jarasandha to the fold of religion. Here the character of Krishna goes against all superhuman activities. Krishna did not try to establish his godliness or preach religion by performing any miracle or black art. Killing of Jarasandha was not intended by Krishna. Protection of religion i.e. saving the innocent was his intention. Preaching religion was the mission of life of Christ and Sakya. Though Krishna preached religion, but that was not his only mission. To this view Bankim Chandra writes, "...........no one should think I intend to underestimate the contribution of Christ or the Buddha in the matter of preaching of their religion. I respect both Christ and
Sakya as the greatest of all men, consider that preaching a religion is the best of all missions of life. But the man who is an ideal person cannot have this as the mission of his life. Because he is an ideal person, he has to perform all kinds of deed. Christ or Sakyasingha are not ideal persons. They are the greatest of all men. They have made thus the best mission of human life. Accepting this mission, they did good to the people.

The term 'ideal' for Bankim Chandra is not the English meaning of the word as often being translated of the Bengali word 'Adarsha'. The Christian ideal person is Christ. We do not accept a thing to be an ideal if its image does not conform to the idea of that ideal. Christ was the savior of the fallen, he did not destroy an evil person, he did not have the power. We see this virtue in Sakyasingha or Sri Chaitanya, and so we are prepared to accept them as ideal.

Bankim Chandra opines in this context that though Krishna is popularly known as the saviour of the fallen, but history revels him as the killer of evil. So suddenly we do not accept him as an ideal person. The question arises, Is this Christian ideal the true ideal of humanity? Should the national ideal of every nation be like that? This results in another question... Do the Hindus have a national ideal? If there is, who is he? Bankim Chandra asserts, 'It is true that they are not there... why we should be so miserable if they were there? But once they were, when the Hindus were the greatest nation of the world. Who is that ideal Hindu?' He further opines that Ramchandra and other Kshatriyas stand very close to that ideal. But the true Hindu ideal is Sri Krishna. He is the true ideal of humanity. There is no possibility of finding that perfect ideal in Christ and others. The person whom all the faculties are fully developed in harmony is the ideal person. This constitute humanity. We find this in Sri Krishna. As Bankim Chandra writes, '......... In this way Krishna did great good to the people though he was not a king......... Krishna had command over all knowledge. The same thing can be said about other qualities.........so Krishna is the truly ideal person. ........'

People perform different types of works according to the differences of their characters, situations, education, etc. But the ideal person should be an ideal for all classes of people. Sri Krishna, henceforth has not made preaching of religion the mission of his life like Sakyasingha.
Christ or Chaitanya by embracing the life of an ascetic. Bankim Chandra writes, "Krishna is a family man, a politician, a warrior, a dispenser of justice, an ascetic, a missionary; he is an ideal person to family men, kings, warriors, government servants, ascetics, religious persons, and is an ideal of all round perfection of humanity". 

Thus the killing of Jarasandha and others is an unavoidable task for an ideal administrator and a dispenser of justice. This is Hindu ideal.

For the Kshatriya driving a chariot is rather a humiliating work. But an ideal person is without pride. When Arjun requested Krishna to be his Charioteer, the latter agreed spontaneously. 'He is without a single blemish and possesses all the best qualities of character'. Bankim Chandra here emphasizes that we shall not be able to understand the ideal person of the perfect Hindu religion, if we place him in the place of the ideal person of the imperfect religions of Buddhism or Christianity. To Bankim Chandra, surprisingly both in Europe and in India the ideals have produced opposite results. The cherished, old ideals of life have been abandoned by the people of both the countries. Once the ideas had a strong hold in both the countries...... tolerance and devotion to religions with all round perfection of qualities prevailed in olden times. When this ideal vanished from the Hindu mind, our social downfall started To this Bankim Chandra significantly remarks, "Everyone is busy following the Krishna of Joydev Gosain, no body remembers the Krishna of the Mahabharata. Now it is the time to awaken that ideal person in the mind of the nation. I hope that this interpretation of the character of Krishna will help this a little".

The Europeans believe that Krishna is only a cowherd, lustful of the wives of others and hence quite sinful. Some native people also believes this too. To some he appears on earth to kill people. Still others believe that he is a crafty, scheming person...... He involves in conspiracy to serve his own purpose. Bankim Chandra in this context writes, 'I am quoting all these things to make it clear that Krishna is none of these, on the contrary he is the greatest benefactor of people, the wisest man, the greatest among the religious missionaries, and is an ideal person'.

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Krishna is a staunch believer in communism (Samayabād). If the religion propagated through the Gita is his own religion, then we must not expect him to make the slightest distinction between any living creatures. Some critics opine that since Krishna is an ideal man, his indulgence in such activities, is only to project his own idealism. But too much of modest devotion is not ideal either. It is a mere exaggeration of modesty. Some others observe that Krishna being very cunning served the Brahmins to enhance his own image. To these objections Bankim Chandra replies that this episode seems to be an interpolation. For, in earlier episodes we find Krishna, instead of washing the Brahmins' feet, engaged in other activities more befitting a Ksatriya. To quote him thus, "The whole issue is not that serious. Our purpose is to show that in many cases, Krishna has been unnecessarily and unworthily praised. Thus multifarious attempts to describe Krishna's character have given rise to the numerous incompatibilities that we come across in the epic".⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

Sri Krishna is the arbiter and the chief protagonist of the Udyogparba. The proper adjustment of force with forgiveness, is the central issue in this parba. Krishna forgives the person who harms others. To Bankim Chandra there are two opinions regarding how to treat an offender in moral science. One opinion holds that the offender should be punished. The other suggests forgiveness. But force and forgiveness are two opposing things. So both cannot be correct neither one of the opinions should be discarded totally. If all the offences are forgiven the society will go to hell. Again if all the offences are punished then man will become beastly by nature. So the adjustment of 'force and forgiveness' is very difficult position in moral science. Even Europe has failed in this adjustment. Thus "the Christian religion of the Europeans asks to forgive all offences, their politics says, punish all offences. In Europe, 'Politics' is stronger than religion, and hence forgiveness is a vanishing thing in Europe and politics has a strange hold on every -thing".⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

Krishna considers that saving one's wealth and property from the thieves, is a great virtue. The present day moralists also agree with this principle. In English, saving of one's own property from small thieves is called 'justice'. While doing the same for the big ones is called 'Patriotism'. The traditional meaning of both is practicing one's own virtue. Krishna
thus said “It is a more welcome thing to sacrifice one’s life, if necessary, for the sake of this, but to turn away from recovering the ancestral kingdom should never be done”. (149)

There are many controversies in this matter in the civilized world. Bankim Chandra has emphatically stated that those who say that ‘what has been said by providence’, form a strong force in this world. They hold that which is present in the Vedas, the Bible or the Koran, is religion. Again that which lies outside is not true. In their opinion religious principles are pre-determined by providence. It is not a fact of guess (anuman). This assertion is a serious hindrance in the path of human progress. This is one of the important causes for the downfall of our country. Hence Bankim Chandra proclaims that even today religious knowledge stops at the barricade of the Vedas, Manu, Yajnavalka, Smriti etc. ........ the liberty to guess is a tobo. Sri Krishna, the greatly foresighted and ideal person for man has foreseen this great obstacle in the path of human progress. Bankim Chandra thus puts it, “When I see the religious ideas in the modern Hindu society, I feel inclined to seek refuge in the ideals of Krishna with a heavy heart”. (150)

But anumana needs something to depend on. We need a sign which will make us understand that a particular work is virtuous. Sri Krishna is pointing out the sign. ‘Religion holds people together, so it is called religion. So the thing that saves and protects people, is religion’. (151) Bankim Chandra has opined that this is the sign which points out the nature and character of the religion preached by Krishna. The followers of Herbert Spencer, Bentham, Mill including the modern times, will not object this view. Many will accept this as a highly beneficial doctrine as it is like the Utilitarian doctrine. For Bankim Chandra, the principles of religion cannot be separated from the doctrine of doing good since God is present in all beings. He is all pervading. As he puts it, “There may be a conflict between narrow Christianity and the beneficial doctrine, but the Hindu religion which says that God is present in all beings and everywhere, the beneficial doctrine is an essential part of that religion. This assertion of Krishna is the true sign of religion.” (152)

For Bankim Chandra, in certain situation violence becomes akin to religion. For Krishna ‘non-violence’ is the greatest virtue ........ which constitute his first message. Many
critics object this view of Krishna. For them non-violence cannot be considered as the greatest virtue in all cases. Secondly this message contradicts Krishna’s own action in which he prevailed over Arjuna to get him involved in the war. To these objections, Bankim Chandra replies, “One who is unable to grasp the purport of non-violence shall raise such objections. Non-violence does not mean that violence in any form and manner is irreligious”.

Thus in ‘Krishna-Charitra’ Bankim Chandra puts forward the principle of truth as enunciated by Krishna. The ‘four-fold’ principles are:

1. What is permitted by religion, is truth, what is against religious principles, is untruth.
2. What is beneficial to the people, is virtue.
3. So what benefits people, is truth, and what goes against this, is untruth.
4. This truth is applicable everywhere, under all circumstances.

Bankim Chandra thus makes this assertion, “Devotees of Krishna may say that, we are ready to abandon the principles of Krishna if you can show that else where a better principle of truth has been enunciated. If you cannot do that then you admit that these are the principles of an ideal person”. In conclusion he wants to establish the fact that what benefits the people and also protects them, is true religion. When we accept this assertion of Krishna and make it the basis of the Hindu religion, then the development and progress of the Hindu nation and the Hindu religion are assured. The Hindu will become united and accept this religion enunciated by Krishna. In no time the incomparable sacred Hindu religion will be free from the rubbish of so called religious principles. Bankim Chandra thus emphatically proclaims:

“Then the superstitious rituals, wastage of time and energy, useless living, can be removed from the society and then the Hindu society will shine in the light of honest work and noble activities. Then hypocrisy, communal fights, mutual hate and attempts to harm, will become non-existent........”
4.6 Bankim Chandra’s Srimadbhagbadgita
A discussion, interpretation and commentary

*Just as fire, though one, entering the world*

*Adopts the shapes of the different objects it burns,*

*Similarly, the one Atman of all living things, though one,*

*Assumes the forms of the various objects He enters*

*And exists also beyond.*

Kathopanishad

Srimadbhagbadgita an interpretation, discussion and commentary work by Bankim Chandra. In this limited space it is not possible to discuss every cantos of the Gita in details as has been done by Bankim Chandra in his work. Here we shall try to bring forth the important issues, as analysed by Bankim Chandra in his commentary. In this precious work he has tried to discuss in details the slokas basically related with the ‘Second, Third and Forth’ cantos of the Gita. The first canto of the Gita contains nothing of religious principles but it is a piece of excellent poetry. For the first canto, Bankim Chandra gives a brief account. The advice which Krishna gives to Arjuna regarding the desires involved in the war, are contained in the second canto of the Gita. It is the ‘Sankhya-yoga’ or the Jnana – Yoga. In other cantos Krishna sometimes advises Arjuna to ‘Fight the War’, but they are hardly related to the duties involved in a war. The true objective of the Gita is not to encourage or support the cause of a war. Bankim Chandra writes here, ‘Its objective is to preach and make man acquainted with the true virtues of his life under the pretext of supporting the war’. (156) Again in the Second canto of the Gita God has spoken about Jnana Yoga and also Krama yoga. But of the two which is greater in virtue has not been clearly stated. In the conclusion God praised a self-possessed man which made Arjuna to ask .......... “if wisdom is greater than activities then why God was engaging him in activities. .....” (157) The Third Canto is named as the Karma yoga. The Forth Canto states that unless work is done selflessly, no virtuous
activity is possible. He is a selfless worker who can overcome his desires and can thus merge in God. 'When a living being merges in The Supreme Being, he achieves salvation. But a living being with desires, cannot merge in the Supreme Being who is pure and without any desire. So only a selfless worker deserves salvation'. (158)

Bankim Chandra doubts that in such an improbable situation whether the religious preaching for the long ‘18 Cantos’ of the Gita can be possible. (159) Further he asserts that in those sections where Krishna has been deemed to be an Avatar, is comparatively modern. (160) So there is every possibility of interpolation.

The purpose behind this Bengali commentary, in spite of all the valuable works on the Gita after Sankara, Bankim Chandra has considered to bring out the essence of the Gita for the ‘educated’ class. While doing so he has adopted the western method. The trouble is that this educated class cannot easily follow the comments and expressions of the scholars of the past. They cannot follow them even when they get a ‘Bengali’ translation of them. Bankim Chandra writes, "To make them (educated class) understand the thing one must adopt the western method and the spirit of the western tradition of thought. My aim in this commentary is to make the essence of the Gita clear to these readers by adopting the western method and with the help of the western thought process". (161)

As far as practicable Bankim Chandra has followed the footsteps of the scholars who were his predecessors. He has prepared this commentary, keeping in view the discussion from Sankara with the commentary of Anandagiri, the discussion from Ramanuja with the commentary of Sridhar Swami, Madhusudan Saraswati, Biswanath Chakraborty etc. But being imbued in him western literature, science and philosophy he is not able to follow his predecessors at every step.

Srimadbhagadgita is included in the section on Bhisma of the Mahabharata. The sections from the 3rd to the 43rd of the section on Bhisma, are called "Bhagbadgita parbadhyay". But the Bhagbadgita starts from the 20th section. (162)

The Gita starts when the soldiers of Duryodhan, the son of Dhritarashtra and Pandavas came face to face in the battle field of Kurukshetra. But the war was yet to start. The Pandavas prepared to win back their kingdom from Duryodhan in a war. They lost it after a deceitful game of dice with Duryodhan. Sanjay narrated everything to
Dhritarastra as he was deprived from the natural eyesight. Vyasa gave Sanjay, the minister of Dhritarastra, a boon. By the blessing of the boon Sanjay could see everything of the battle field with his divine eyesight. Dhritarastra asked him informations about the battle field and he answered him. The war episodes of the Mahabharata are written in this manner. Bankim Chandra observes thus, .......

"This matter of divine eyesight is not natural and I do not ask my readers to believe it. This has no relation with religious virtues mentioned in the Gita". The First section, he asserts, contain nothing of the interpretations of the virtues which is the objective of the Gita. The First Section and the first eleven slokas of the Second Section illustrates that 'in what context and under what circumstances the issue was raised. To imbibe the essence of the Gita this part is not necessary'.

In the Mahabharata we see that Arjuna was in favour of a war from the beginning. But when the time came to kill his relatives, he felt that the war was unjust. We also see that Sri Krishna tried his best that the war should not take place. But when the war became inevitable he decided not to take any side. He only agreed to be the charioteer of Arjuna's chariot.

O King ! Smiling a little Hrishikes was to Arjuna, sitting in a distressed mood between the two armies, in this way. (10-The Gita/3)

God said .......

You seem to be speaking like a wise man, but you are afflicted with grief for those for whom you should not grieve at all. Wise men never lament for either the living or the dead.

Here begins the Gita truly. (164)

Bankim Chandra opines that we must first of all try to understand what is called, "one's own religious virtue" or simply "virtue".

According to Sankara, Arjuna was a Kshatriya and so his own virtue was to fight the war. But Arjuna denies to fight. On the contrary, he agrees to beg, which is the virtue of others. To this Bankim Chandra observes that 'Is the religion or virtues preached by God meant for the Hindus only ?' The religion preached by God cannot be so narrow in its approach. In reply he thus says that "What is one's duty is also one's virtue. Now what is the virtue of man in general ? The qualities that make a man humane, his humanism is
Man's humanism consists of the faculties of the body and the mind. The proper cultivation of these faculties is the virtue of a man.

Krishna in the Second Canto from the 12th sloka to the 38th sloka sings the glory of the ways of wisdom. Then he explains the ways of work or action. The fundamental truth of the ways of wisdom is the indestructibility of the soul.

According to Bankim Chandra, 'the indestructibility of the soul is the basic tenet of the Hindu religion. This is actually the fundamental truth of every religion. 'The truth is that there is a soul independent of the body and that soul is indestructible. The body may be destroyed but the soul continues to live in the next world'. But there is and may be differences of opinion about what happens to the soul in the next world. The chief detractors of this theory are the scientists. They opine that there exists nothing independent of the body.

Science fails to find the soul because the soul has never been perceived directly by anyone. Moreover man does not possess any knowledge, originating in direct perception, from which the soul can be guessed. Science has failed to comprehend the soul because it does not has the power to go that far. As Bankim Chandra said, 'The rope of proof is tied round the waist of science, how it can comprehend the theory of the existence of the soul which lies beyond the reach of all proofs. Science has no right to go to a place the level of which it cannot reach. It is a mistake on the part of science to try and reach that great and elevated position sitting at its lowest steps and thinking that its achievements are a magnificent success'.

To Bankim Chandra the Hindu explanation of the theory of the existence of the soul is the most lofty, liberal and pure. Human life becomes worthy and fruitful when it is believed. 'This is one of the most important reasons why the Hindu religion is superior to all other religions'. Every individual has a soul. The souls in the different living bodies are different from one another. But all are parts of the soul of the universe. The soul residing in a body is called the 'Individual Soul'. The soul of the universe is called the 'Supreme Being'. The individual soul and the Supreme Being are identical. The individual soul is immortal being indestructible and part of the Supreme Being, which is also immortal. This is the teaching of Hinduism. As writes Bankim Chandra, "... The one who cannot comprehend and realise God in his heart, cannot realise Him with the help of
science. The one who has achieved the grace of God in his heart does not need any scientific proof to prove the belief of the existence of the soul". He holds thus that both science and religion are truths.

The second teaching of the Hindu Religion is the doctrine of rebirth. This doctrine of rebirth is very important in Hindu religion. All branches of the Gita, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the philosophy, are based on it. “As germs are strung in a string, so all the doctrines and teachings of the Hindu religion are strung in this string”.

As the being with a body has his childhood, youth and old age, so he also suffers change of the body (doctrine of rebirth). The wise are not influenced by it. The Gita.

In this sloka the doctrine of rebirth is highlighted.

It is admitted that death is inevitable followed by rebirth. The doctrine of rebirth is not accepted by every religion. This doctrine is found unacceptable in Europe as it has no scientific proof. Hence the educated Bengali does not accept this doctrine. But Bankim Chandra asserts, “But the person who believes in heaven and hell, is in no way in a better position than the one who believes in the doctrine of rebirth. As the doctrine of rebirth has no other proof but that they are the assertions of the sages, so there is no other proof of the existence of heaven and hell……”

The Hindu religion particularly the Gita explains that usually the individual soul is born again taking a different body. The soul is reborn, good or evil, according to the consequences of one’s work. With this doctrine of rebirth several objections have been raised by the non-believers of this doctrine. The objections have been replied by those who believe in this doctrine. So there is no victory or defeat for any one. Bankim Chandra observes that for the believers in the immortality of the soul, the only alternative is to believe in the doctrine of rebirth. But the problem lies with those who believe in the indestructibility of the soul but does not believe in its immortality. Such imagination is unacceptable to science. The fundamental law of science is that the laws of nature are inviolable and they are ever existent. But those who do not believe the independent existence and immortality of the soul will not believe in the doctrine of rebirth. As he remarks, ‘I only wish to tell them that though the doctrine of rebirth cannot be proved, they should not hold it in disrespect’.
In the 14th, 15th and 16th slokas, the 3rd teaching has been stated that the transient nature of sorrow and happiness and that one can be unaffected by them by being indifferent to them. Bankim Chandra interprets this view from the standpoint of Sankhya philosophy.

It has been said that this body of the soul, which is immortal, indestructible is mortal. Hence, O Bharat! Fight the war (18-The Gita/2)

Sridhar’s interpretation of this sloka reveals the indestructibility of the soul. He says that as it is free from the feeling of sorrow and happiness so there is no reason for our lament which comes from illusion. As has been opined by him thus, ‘fight i.e. do not give up your own virtue’. Sankara in this context opines that the duty to fight the war is not prescribed. Arjuna is influenced by the illusion of lamentation. God is only trying to remove the obstacles in the path of his duty. So for him, “fight the war” is only an interpretation, not a prescription or command.

According to Bankim Chandra the term ‘one’s own virtue’ can be replaced by the word ‘duty’. This may remove certain difficulty. The objective of the Gita is that one should do one’s duty as sincerely as one practices a religious virtue. The duty of everyone is not the same. Some one’s duty may be punished while others may be forgiven. There are as many activities of men as there are his own duties or virtues.

Renunciation of desires is the cause of enjoyment of happiness which is the fruit of performance of works. Happiness resulting from the performance of work come to him on its own. That kind of happiness brings peace. To this view Bankim Chandra supports that there is no true happiness which comes from the fulfillment of desires, that happiness is no happiness at all.

The person who relinquishes all his desires, lives life with indifference, without affection and without pride, enjoys real peace of the mind. (71-The Gita/2)

O Partha! This is the concentration of the mind in the Brahma with true devotion, when a person achieves this, he is not charmed or moved by anything. When this is achieved even at the time of death, his soul merges in the Brahma (does not suffer rebirth) (72-The Gita/2)

When ‘concentration in the Brahma and restraint of the senses and relinquishment of desires’ are practiced then true virtue is completed. This is the essence of the Hindu
religion. The Gita is only an extension of this, the rest is only suggestions of manners and methods according to necessity. Bankim Chandra opines, ‘This is within the reach of all. It does not need the study of the Vedas, no need to go through the rituals of morning and evening. It is within the reach of women, the outcaste, the alien, the Muslim, the Christian and all else. This is the only true religion in the world, the only Catholic religion’. 

This is the end of the Sankhya-yoga, the second Canto of the Gita.

God has said in a little ambiguous way about the comparative virtues of wisdom and activity. The 49th sloka may create some confusion. (‘O Dhananjay, Work is much inferior to understanding’... Buddhi Yoga) According to the commentators (Here Anandagiri has also referred to the 49th sloka of the 2nd canto, while explaining the 1st sloka of the 3rd canto) if understanding means ‘positive-understanding’ related to work then there will be no confusion. Here Bankim Chandra observes that perhaps God deliberately waited for the question (Ref. of 49th sloka) from Arjuna. To explain the distinction between wisdom and activity and in the relation between the two which is highly beneficial to man, must be a product of super human intelligence. ‘Such a religion promoting universal well-being has never been preached in the world’. 

In the ‘Third Canto’ God answers to Arjuna that even if wisdom is greater than activity, one cannot remain without activity. Even the state of indifference cannot be attained if every activities is stopped. (The Gita/3) The wise or the ascetic cannot forsake activities which are under nature’s compulsions. ‘The simple answer is that no one can forsake any work which are obligatory by nature. Devotion to God depends on a person’s free will, but can a devotee of wisdom forsake it? Then what is the objective of acquiring wisdom?’

Apart from the general kinds of work, there are two kinds of works... one is obligatory i.e. legal, the other is prescribed in the Vedas, according to the Hindu scriptures. To Bankim Chandra, in the interpretation of the Gita, work means all kinds of work (‘No one can stay for a moment without doing some kind of work. Compelled by natural habits everyone does some kind of work’... The Gita/3) It is not the will of God that by the word ‘work’ only the ‘legal obligations and the obligations as prescribed by the Vedas’ must be understood.
In the 8th sloka of the 3rd Canto, God gives the answer to Arjuna’s question “Then why you are engaging me in this malevolent work?” The answer is that none can give up work. If work is given up success cannot be achieved. Needless to say, physical needs of life are achieved only through activities. Hence “if work has to be done then it should be done in a manner which will be beneficial to you”. For work to be beneficial two rules are prescribed............

The First is the control of sense - organs by the mind. The Second is, work must be done with indifference to its result. Apart from these two, there is The third, ‘which is the most excellent and the greatest and lies at the centre of the doctrine of work (Karma yoga)’

All works other than what are performed in the Yajans ; are bondages of this mortal world. So, O Kauntya ! you should do your work (for the yajnas) with indifference (to the result) [9-The Gita/3]

According to Sankara, works which are related to the worship of God are called yajnas. Sridhar and Madhusudan Sarawati follow him. But Ramanuja holds that works which are related to acquire possessions, are called yajnas. Sankaracharya’s interpretation of the 9th sloka of this canto reveals, ‘all works which are not related to the worship of God, are only bondages resulting from the performance of works. So do your work with indifference to its results and only for the worship of God’. Bankim Chandra quotes in this context, ‘The true worship of God is to look upon everything and all beings with a balanced mind and an unprejudiced eye’. (180)

In the 39th sloka, (‘O Kauntya ! The eternal enemy of a wise person is desire it is insatiable and it is like fire, and it covers the wisdom’. 39-The Gita/3) it is said that ‘Desire’ is the eternal enemy of a wise person. Again in the 41st sloka, (‘So, O the greatest of the Bharata ! You first restrain your senses and then destroy or abandon this desire which destroys wisdom and ‘Vigyan’ 41-The Gita/3) it is explained that if the senses are the refuge of desire then they should be restrained first. Then the desire can be destroyed. With the 43rd sloka, (‘You understand the Supreme Being with this intellect and be amazed by it. O Powerful ! you overcome your indomitable enemy, your desire’ 43-The Gita/3) the third canto ends.

The word intellect has been used as ‘to be the positive faculty of the mind’. With this positive faculty of the mind the Supreme Being should be comprehended. Then
keeping oneself calm and indifferent, one can overcome every desire.

The Fourth Canto of the Gita explains the value of the selfless work. It starts in this fashion, ……

God said, ……

I told this yoga which does not wear out (loses its value and importance) to the Sun, The Sun told it to Manu, Manu told it to Ikshaku. (1-The Gita/4)

The fruits of this yoga is imperishable so it is called ‘Abboy’ (which does not wear out). Ikshaku is the son of Manu, and the founder of the dynasty of the kings coming from the Sun.

In this canto God suddenly raises the issue of the ‘Doctrine of Incarnation’ It is necessary to understand the relation between Work and Wisdom. To this issue of ‘Doctrine of Incarnation’, Sankara says ‘What is my (God’s) own nature …….. i.e., the Vaishnabhee Maya with the three qualities, which influences the whole universe, by whose charm people do not know me as Basudev, I overcome it and I am born. His own Mava, it means, it is not like the births of ordinary men who are born again and again to achieve salvation’. 

Sridhar Swami interprets that God retains His own pure qualities but with a purer and brighter incarnation, He is born according to His own will.

Bankim Chandra opines that the principle of maya is a very important place in the theism of the Hindus particularly in the Upanishad and the philosophy. Maya is a power of God. He tries to understand the word maya from the standpoint of the Gita.

These are my inferior natures. Know my superior quality also. It is like a being (with consciousness) which is supporting the world. (5-The Geeta/7).

‘Then the power of God which is like a being, which is supporting the world, in His Superior quality of Maya. With this power which is like a being, God has created all beings. By bringing that power under His control He can transform His self into beings’

God explains that it is necessary for Him to appear in a corporeal form to save the Dharma. In ‘Krishna-Charitra’, Bankim Chandra has tried to explain that the purpose of God to appear in a human form is to preach the ideal of humanity. There can be no other purpose. An ideal person is also an ideal worker. It has been said that some people worship gods to get the fruits of their work in this mortal life while others perform selflessly. This strange behaviour is due to the differences in nature. This difference in nature is at the bottom of the system of caste division. The caste division is the result of
God's will. The question arises . . . . "Then does God work ? Yes, He does. And yet ever after doing this work He is not the doer. Because He is imperishable . . . . . . . . . He is a selfless worker". When a living being merges in the Supreme Being, he achieves salvation. Only a selfless worker deserves salvation.

According to Bankim Chandra the 19th sloka is easier to understand the principle of selfless work. This principle is also found in the 18th sloka. As he said, 'Work which is done without any expectation of its fruits, where all desires are shunned, is idleness . . . . a workless state. And the person who desists from doing a work which is his duty, must suffer for shunning his duty, so here idleness is also work, for it is the cause of giving the fruits of the work. The person who understands this is wise'.

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa are the four objectives (Purusartha) achieved by man. There is no other objective of man besides these. That which does not fall within dharma, artha and salvation, is desire. Worship to achieve heaven etc. through work with desire aims at personal happiness. It is not for the benefit of others. The work whose objective is the benefit of others, is truly desire less. As Bankim Chandra significantly remarked, 'The five senses, the mind and the soul, when these things remain in their own spheres and give us joy and pleasure, it should be called desire according to my opinion. That is the best fruits of work'.

So desire means happiness of the self.

Thus to conclude we can refer to the words of Bankim Chandra which can explain the essence of the teachings of the Gita, "All the teachings of the Gita are for all men. Those who believe in the doctrine of rebirth, for them it is the greatest religion, those who do not, for them also it is the best. The person who is devoted to Krishna, it is the greatest religion for him, and the person who is not devoted to Krishna, for him also it is the greatest. It is the greatest religion for the man who believes in God, it is also the greatest religion for an atheist; because restraint of sensual desires and purification of the soul, are also the greatest virtues for an atheist. The objective of the Gita is the purification of the soul. Such universal and all - embracing religion has never been preached in the world. Every one will accept that much of it what he deserves. What one does not believes, he is only an intruder there. What one deserves, one will get it from the Gita".
REFERENCE AND NOTES


4. Bankim Rachanavali, Ed. (Jogesh Chandra Bagal) P-23


6. Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad) P-231

7. Dharmatattwa, Trans. Manomohan Ghosh P-13

8. Bankim Rachanavali, Vol 2 P-778

9. The Religion of Man P-89

10. Religion and Society P-119

11. Frank Thilly : A History of Philosophy P-520


13. Op cit. Quoted, P-614


15. Dharmatattwa P-585

16. Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad) P-267

17. Dharmatattwa P-598

18. Op cit. P-575


A similar view is also found in Rajnarain’s opinion while explaining the ideals of ‘Brahma Dharma’. In the lecture, ‘What is Brahmaism; he writes: ‘It considers religious blessedness to consists in a harmonious operation of all our faculties and harmonious operation of all our duties. It does not consider any quality, faculty, feeling.
passion or appetite given by God to us unnecessary but maintains that it requires only proper regulations ............to be true religion'

20. Ernest Barker : Greek Political Theory P -221
21. Will Durant : The Story of Philosophy, (Quoted) P -75
22. Frank Thilly : A History of Philosophy P -115
23. Dharmatattwa, Trans. Manomohan Ghosh P -4
25. Carol R. Ember & Melvin Ember : Anthropology P -4
26. Op cit P -7
27. Culture is the way of active life. Asceticism is the way of renouncing the same.
    Asceticism is imperfect dharma. Lord Krishna has proclaimed the superiority of action.
28. Dharmatattwa, Chap. XVI, 'Devotion ....... The Bhagabadgita on Samnyasa
29. Op cit. Chap X1
30. Op cit P -581
31. Op cit P -551
32. Op cit. 'Devotion ..... The Bhagabadgita on Knowledge' Chap XV
33. Op cit P -603
34. Op cit
    'Aesthetic Faculties' PP -604-605
35. Rabindranath Tagore in Perspective P -32
36. Dharmatattwa 'Culture' P -536
    C.f.'Devotion to God ......... the Visnu-purana' : "Prahlada replied, "Father, who can teach me except Visnu who is the ruler of this infinite world, who is within my heart and who is the Supreme Atman?"
37. Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad) P -265
38. H. Smith: 'The Religious of Man' P -16
Bankim Chandra asserts that the knowledge of God is best reflected in the
Bhagavadgita. In this respect the noble words of God:

(Trans) ‘One who is united with me though Yoga, sees himself in all creatures
and all creatures in himself, and perceives an equality everywhere, sees me every­
where and sees everyone in me. I am not lost to him, and neither is he lost to me’

Dharmatattwa, Trans. Manomohan Ghosh

P-138.

44. The Great Sova Bazar Sradh : Letters in the Hastie Controversy
The Statesman, September 23, 1882. (Sahitya Samsad)

45. Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad) P-215
46. The Intellectual Superiority of Europe
(The Statesman, October 28, 1882. Sahitya Samsad)

47. Rudolf Otto : The Idea of the Holy Chap-III
48. Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad) P-216
49. Bankim Rachanavali ‘Dharmatattwa’ Vol. II. P-587

50. Op cit Chap XXI
51. Op cit Chap XXV
52. S. Radhakrishnan : Religion and Society (Quoted) P-107

C.F. To quote from Santiparva, ‘He who, by his action, mind and speech is continu­
ally engrossed in the welfare of others and who is always a friend of others, O Jajali,
knows the meaning of dharma’.

Op cit P-108

53. S. Radhakrishnan : Search for Truth P-55
54. Carl Clemen : Religion of the World P-112
55. Bankim Rachanavali Vol. II P-534
56. Op cit P-536
C.f. To such a view Bankim Chandra writes that from his very early years, the question which often occurred to him, “What shall I do with this life?” “What is to be done with this life?” ..... To fulfil the object of my life, I laboured at the risk of my life. As a result of all this labour and all this trouble, I have learnt this much that the leaning of all the faculties to God is devotion, and without devotion there cannot be any humanity.

Dharmatattwa (Trans. Manomohan Ghosh) P-78

C.f. The worship with desire is an action which is preceded by desire and the desire less action is devotion. Druva's devotion was with desire. To obtain the superior position he worshipped Visnu. His worship is not true devotion. But Prahlada's worship was desire less. He was not devoted to God with a view to obtain anything. He had to face various dangers for his devotion to God. His desire less love is real devotion. Prahlada is the greatest of devotees.

From : Vishnu Purana, 'Dharmatattwa', Chap XIV

Seeley : Natural Religion (1882) PP-73-74

Dharmatattwa Chap XI, P.-573

The Intellectual Superiority of Europe

The Statesman, Oct 28, 1882, (Sahitya Samsad)
Note: Suppose that on one side we can accomplish the welfare of one person, and on the other side we can accomplish for each of one hundred people one-quarter of that welfare. Then the calculation of the welfare of those one hundred people is 100/4 = 25.

Here it is dharma to accomplish the little welfare of each of the one hundred people and to give up the great welfare of the one person. On the other hand, if the welfare of each of the one hundred people should be not one quarter, but one thousandth, then the total of the individual welfare of these one hundred people would be only 1/10 of the welfare of the one person. Therefore in this case it is dharma to accomplish the welfare of the one person, and to give up the welfare of those one hundred people.
Dharmatattwa Chap XXII P.-591
91. Bankim Rachanavali : 'Dharmatattwa' 'Self love' Chap XXII
92. Benthan : Principles of Moral and Legislation Chap I
93. Loc. cit.
94. Frank Thilly : A History of Philosophy P.-524
95. Op cit. P.-562
96. Gordon Allport : The Individual and his Religion P.-25
97. Broom, Leonard and Selznick, Philip :
   "Sociology – A Text Book with Adapted Readings (ed, 4th)" P.-308
   ‘Knowledge and Depth’
100. Bankim Rachanavali : ‘Dharmatattwa’ Chap XXIII P.-593
101. ‘The Study of Hindu Philosophy’ (Sahitya Samsad) P.-143
102. Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad) P.-241
103. Op cit P.-239
104. S. Radhakrishna : Religion and Society P.-105
105. Dharmatattwa Chap. XXVI. ‘Kindness’ P.-530
107. Loc. cit. P.-331
110 Bankim Rachanavali Vol. 2P.-333
Bankimchandra Chatterjee Sociological Essays Utilitarianism and Positivism In
Bengal (Ed.) S. N. Mukherjee and Marian Maddern ‘Samya’(Trans.)
111. Bankim Rachanavali Vol. II P.-335
112. Dharmatattwa P.-589
113. Bankim Rachanavali P.-536
Hinduism teaches this to an extent which is unknown to other religions. In Hinduism the Brahmins are respected by all. They occupied the highest place in the caste-system and were objects of devotion by all. They were teachers of dharma, they were moralists, they were scientists, they were mythologists, they were philosophers, they were litterateurs and were the poets. This is the view of Bankim Chandra.

Bankim Rachanavali, (Sahitya Samsad)

C.f. The Character of Sitaram illustrates the teachings of the Gita: It is contemplation of the objects of sense makes man attached to them and gradually he is led to ruin. Therefore complete control over the senses is necessary for happiness in life.

Cf. To this view, Bankimchandra refers to Herbert Spencer. He says that this is the reason why Spencer has abandoned his original idea of a God without attributes and has taken recourse to a God who is something higher than personality.
Bankim Chandra in this context observes that in order to revive the zeal of the Vaishnavite philosophy, the compiler of the Brahmavaivarta Purana included, in his propagation, the gist of the dominant Tantric philosophy. His Radha corresponds to the Prakriti of the Sankhya Philosophy.

Loc. cit.

131. Op cit

132. Bankim Rachanavali

133. Krishna – Charitra, Part III Section 2

‘Education’

134. Op cit

135. Op cit Part IV, Section 1

136. Bankim Rachanavali

137. Krishna – Charitra, Quoted

138. Bankim Rachanavali

139. Loc. cit.

140. Krishna – Charitra Part 4, Section 7

141. Loc. cit.

142. Bankim Rachanavali

143. Loc. cit.

144. Loc. cit.

145. Op cit Part IV, Section 7

146. Op cit

147. Krishna Charitra. Part IV, Section IX

148. Bankim Rachanavali

149. Op cit

150. Loc. cit.

151. Bankim Rachanavali

152. Op cit

153. Krishna – Charitra
O Janaardan! If in your opinion wisdom is greater than activities,
then O Keshab! Why you are engaging me in this malevolent work?
(1-The Gita/3)

C.f. Bankim Chandra observes that it seems quite improbable that when the two armies stood in battle array and wore about to strike, then a general of one army will place his chariot between the two armies and patiently listen to religious preaching for the long 18 cantos of the Gita.

C.f. It is not, that I never was. It is not, that you or these kings were not there. It is not, that after this none of us will be there (12-The Gita/2)

C.f. Bankim Chandra cites the illustration of empty vessels kept in an open space. The space in one of them is different from another. But the space in all of them is a part of the vast space of the universe. If the vessels are broken all differences in space cease to exist. The spaces of all the vessels merge with the space of the universe and become
identical.

Bankim Rachanavali  
Vol. II P -633

171. Op cit  
P -635

172. Op cit  
P -637

C.f. The Christians say that God after His final judgement, sends the sinners to eternal hell and the virtuous to eternal heaven. This view of the Christian has led to several controversies and criticism. Detail analysis is made by Bankim Chandra in 'Srimadbhagadgita'  
P -638

173. Bankim Rachanavali  
Vol. II. P -643

174. Op cit  
P -650

175. Op cit  
P -659

176. Loc. cit.

177. Loc. cit.

178. Op cit  
P -680

179. Loc. cit.

180. Op cit  
P -681

181. ‘Srimadbhagadgita’  
P -669

182. Loc. cit.

183. Bankim Rachanavali  
Vol. II. P -704

184. Op cit  
P -705

185. Op cit  
P -645

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