Chapter I

Religious Scene in Bengal in 1870s

During the seventies of the last century, Bengal was in a state of religious ferment which differed in quality and kind from that of the earlier part of the century. The restlessness generated in Hindu Society by the impact of European Rationalism and Christianity on the one hand and the reforms prescribed by Rammohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj on the other had been of a character quite different from the restlessness of this later period. In the first half of the nineteenth century English-educated Indians were so dazzled with the new light they received from the West, that in their zeal for reform they sadly overdid their part. In religion as in social customs and education, what was sought to be reformed and discarded was in most cases suggested by European critics of Hindu society, although except in education, the initiative in reconstruction generally proceeded from the Hindus themselves. Idolatry in religion, casteism and polygamy in social customs, (to name only two amongst the multitude of Hindu customs that offended the contemporary European conscience) were the items which they sought to discard. Also the study of Sanskrit language and ancient Indian learning in education began to be neglected. Vedantic Monotheism in religion, castelessness and monogamy in social customs, English language and English learning in education were the corresponding items embodying
the proposed reconstruction. Confining ourselves to religious
reformation which is our proper subject, the following extracts
from Rammohan's works may be looked upon as embodying the
whole of the religious impulse that dominated the religious
scenen in the half century that preceded the year 1870.

"My constant reflections to (sic) the inconvenient,
or rather injurious rites, introduced by the peculiar practice
of Hindu idolatry, which more than any other pagan worship,
destroys the texture of society, ........ have compelled me
to use every effort to awaken (my countrymen) from their
dream of error."

"I regret to say that the present system of religion
adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote
their political interests. The distinction of castes, intro­
ducing innumerable divisions and sub-divisions among them,
has entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling and the
multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and the laws
of purification have totally disqualified them from under­
taking any difficult enterprises. It is necessary that
some change should take place in their religion at least 2
for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort."

These extracts certainly mean that, with Rammohan
religious reform was an instrument for social and political
reform. The extracts, as they stand, can even be whole­
heartedly supported by secularists and atheists. They advo­
cate no positive religious doctrine, the denunciation of
idolatry in the first extract being actuated by a motive
which is wholly social and not particularly religious. But
it must be remembered that this extract formed a part of
Rammohan's preface to the Abridgment of the Vedant, a work
in which he was pleading eloquently for Vedantic Monotheism

1. Preface to the New Translation of an Abridgment of the
2. Letter to James Silk - Buckingham, 1818.
This was a positive religious doctrine, but even in its advocacy, Rammohan never allowed his love for the formless God of the Upanishads to get the better of his zeal for awakening his countrymen from their 'dream of error'. This dream was supposed to consist in their addition to idolatry and idolatrous rites and their support of the prevalent forms of Vaishnavism, particularly the sort of Vaishnavism that derived from Chaitanya.

It will not be a wrong summing up of the history of the Brahmo Movement up to the year 1866, (the year which saw the first schism in the Brahmo camp), to say that up to that year, in the religious controversies of educated Hindus, search for the meaning of religion and for a genuine religious life, played a part which was no more than secondary to the primary aim of combating European criticism by way of agitating for social reform on the lines suggested by that criticism and by denouncing the rites and beliefs practised and held by the generality of Hindus. This is not to deny the fact that there were amongst educated Hindus of that period, men like Devendranath Tagore, (1817-1905), who, as followers of Vedantic Monotheism dedicated their lives to the search for genuine spiritual illumination. But such instances do not contradict our point that, till the year

1. The spirit of Western rationalism, disseminated through the teachings of the Hindu College, proved inadequate to solve Devendranath’s spiritual problems and the result was a period of almost intolerable spiritual agony and unrest. His autobiography amply testifies to his search for 'personal illumination'.

1
1866, the religious discontent of educated Hindus was largely religious centred in a groove which was social rather than religious. The split in the Brahmo Samaj in that year, under the leadership of Keshub Chandra Sen, showed that something deeper was in the offing and the kind of spiritual unrest that we find in Keshub Chandra Sen is something unique in the recent religious history of Bengal. During the previous half century the uneasiness of conscience of the educated Hindus on the score of their social customs, held up to ridicule by Europeans (including Christian missionaries) had overshadowed their search for personal illumination.

(A) Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884):

It is notable that the parting of ways between Keshub Chandra Sen and Devendranath Tagore started with a question of social reform and involved nothing that could be called a genuinely religious issue. Keshub Chandra was in favour of intercaste marriage — a measure which to the cautious Devendranath seemed too sweeping and too premature to be included in the social reform programme of the then Brahmo Samaj. Moreover, Keshub pleaded for the abolition of the Brahmanical thread worn by the Acharyas (i.e. priests) of the Samaj, and it was ultimately on this issue that he parted company with his leader to found a society on his own. To this he gave the name Bharat Varshiya Brahmo Samaj (1866).

But it soon began to be clear that social reform was far from the only reason of his parting of ways with
Devendranath. In Keshub we are actually in the presence of a restless religious seeker, who, during the remaining years of his short life (1838-1884), would often part company with his dearest friends on issues which to a social reformer would seem trumpery, if not actually ridiculous. This in the very next year following his founding of a new Samaj, ostensibly with the intention of pursuing a more radical reform programme than that of the parent body, and thereby causing a more fundamental breach with Hindu society than Devendranath ever intended, Keshub gave clear indications of a proclivity for religious ecstasy which would seem offensive to the Brahmos of the earlier generation. To make matters worse, the outer forms adopted by Keshub and his followers in their desire for ecstasy, very nearly approximated the devices of Chaitanya. According to Keshub's biographer, the introduction of Khole and processional dancing and singing by way of invoking the name of God was something novel in the Brahmo Samaj. When Keshub's heart was filled with Bhakti, it yearned for things that would give full expression to this new impulse. He was moved with the desire for processional dancing and singing to the accompaniment of Khole.

This 'influx of Bhakti,' a phrase used by Keshub himself at a later period in his life to describe the new impulse—was startlingly revealed in an incident which

occurred in October, 1867. To understand the full significance of this incident we must remember that Keshub had been a student of the Hindu College. The education imparted by this College was not only wholly secular and exuding, in an overpowering way, the exotic odour of European rationalism; but at the same time, it was marked by an excessive antipathy to everything designated by the name 'Hindu'. Admittedly Keshub was not a Derozian; and the historical accident of his separation (by about a quarter of a century) from those early products of the Hindu College, who bore that imposing title precluded him from expressing his disgust with Hindu practices and manners by so categorical an assertion as: "If there is anything that we hate from the bottom of our heart, it is Hinduism." But Keshub, in his revival of Hindu customs and practices, did not have even the excuse of a Rammohan who had escaped the influence of the Hindu College by having reached middle age at the time of its foundation and a Devendranath who had remained untouched by that influence by an exclusive pre-occupation with religion and a crusading zeal against Christian missionaries which at times seemed to border on an antipathy to the founder of Christianity. Keshub's own attitude to Christ was in striking contrast to that of his erstwhile leader. In lecture after lecture he sang the praise of Christ in words of such passionate enthusiasm, that to this day, scholars have been debating whether his whole life was not after all dedicated to the mission of preaching on Indian

1. Sibnath Sen Sastri: Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkal Banga Samaj, Chapter IV.
kind of Christianity. Whether this opinion be true or not, neither Keshub's education, nor the circle with which he associated, nor his connection with the early Brahm Samaj, would give him much scope for retaining in his mind any respect, not to say weakness, for any Hindu religious custom, which the generality of the English-educated Bengalis of that period looked upon as ridiculous if not actually vulgar.

With this background of Keshub's upbringing in mind we must examine afresh the significance of the incident that occurred on the 5th of October, 1867. On that date the citizens of Calcutta were regaled with the spectacle of a religious procession with Keshub at its head, and a great number of his followers bringing up the rear. All these English-educated gentlemen were dancing together and raising a chorus addressed to God with words of assurance to all sinners to the effect that their salvation was certain if only they were going to behave in a like manner. The dancing and singing were of course accompanied with a vigorous slapping of Khole, those spindle-shaped leather devices, the ridiculousness of whose shape was accentuated by their being made to dangle from the necks of those respected gentlemen. Keshub, the darling of Westernised Calcuttans, was, in short, leading a Nagar-Sankirtan - the favourite device of Chaitanya and his followers, intended to produce religious ecstasy of a communal kind.

Was Keshub turning a Hindu? Before answering this question we must note that the oddity of this incident had...
not been lost upon Keshub's followers, some of whom joined the procession only after some persuasion. Their reaction at the introduction of Khole, for example, has been quaintly described by Keshub's biographer in the following manner:

"Khole arrived, but the minds of Keshub's friends were not yet prepared for Khole."  

This reproachful statement on the part of one of the sincerest admirers of Keshub Chandra obviously conceals the fact that his English-educated friends were dismayed at their leader's fall from "progressive" Brahmoism into Hindu rusticity. Keshub was supposed to be much more progressive in his religious outlook than Devendranath Tagore. He had agitated for intercaste marriage, and broken with Devendranath on the question of the sacred thread worn by Brahmo priests, which the latter was unwilling to renounce. It was incomprehensible that this same Keshub would take to dancing in the streets and make himself ridiculous in a manner, which, even to a large number of Hindus seemed to be a sort of antic, devised by Chaitanya for the benefit of the illiterate masses. It was only Keshub's transparent sincerity and his conviction that in resorting to Nagarp Sankirtan he was being driven by an urge for higher spirituality, that his followers reluctantly joined the procession. But on that date was sown the seed of a second schism in the Brahmo camp.

We have dwelt on this incident in some detail with a view to making the point that one of the greatest minds in the Brahmo Samaj, in his search for spirituality, was no longer finding spiritual sustenance in the congregational worship of the formless God, introduced by Rammohan Roy and re-established by Devendranath Tagore by way of reforming the idolatrous religion of the Hindus. Keshub's own explanation of the matter was given in the following words:

"There was no Bhakti (passionate attachment to God) in my life at first ........ There was faith; there was conscience; there was asceticism. All the three words begin with V."

Keshub continues to say that these three were the stock-in-trade of Brahmo spiritual seekers before his time:

In those days I was an uncompromising follower of conscience; so were almost all the Brahmos of the time. How one type of character, reproduced, was made manifest in many, spreading to five, ten, and even a hundred young people!

To Keshub, this type of character began to lose its appeal:

"The name of the bhakti musical instrument (Mridanga) was not heard among us; we had not yet learnt to call God by the sweet name of Hari; the face of the Divine Mother beaming with joy was completely hidden from sight. The Brahmo worshippers did not yet address God as the Lord of Beauty (Srīnath) the Divine Spouse."

---

2. Ibid.
4. Jeevan-veda, Chapter VII.
Obviously the efforts of Rammohun and Devendranath were completely lost upon Keshub. Their endeavours to free Hinduism from the cult of Hari and the cult of Divine Mother had back-fired, and the fire had consumed their most illustrious disciple.

Keshub's explanation of the incident of October 5, is characteristic of the man:

"There was among us some devotees in whom Bhakti made its appearance before it did in me. Why did they not introduce the mrdanga? Why did they not take the lead in organizing community and choral singing Sankirtan? ....... why? Because if one, who is not a devotee in any sense, (Keshub is referring to himself) were to take to dancing and singing on seeing the Mother, the scene would, as in a flash, quicken the right spirit and the intuitive vision of those who beheld it ........... Therefore it is that! was made to serve His purpose in this strange fashion."

It is only fair to add that Keshub did not recognise such acts and such beliefs of his as militating against the Brahma conception of formless God. He was prompt in asserting that he was not reviving the idolatrous cults of Hari and of the Divine Mother. He would justify himself, quite sincerely, by saying that he was only adopting the popular idolatrous forms of Bhakti, to the worship of the formless God of the Brahma Samaj. But this answer would hardly convince the progressives in his own faction, not to mention the followers of Devendranath Tagore.

The remaining acts of Keshub's life have to be viewed in the light of the clue furnished by the incident of October 5. In 1868, he became the centre of a new controversy, in which he was publicly accused of intending to revive the

1. Ibid.
Hindu doctrine of incarnation and claiming to be an Avatar in his own person. He had actually been seen receiving salutation from some of his followers, who had publicly prostrated themselves before him in a manner which bespoke the sort of humility to which only Avatars were entitled. Public ridicule in the form of written denunciation of his conduct from the followers of Devendranath as well as a few of his own brought from Keshub the reply that while he was far from making the claim of Avatarhood in his own person, he held such gestures of humility to be quite proper in devotees as an aid to higher spirituality. The critics amongst his own followers were silenced but it became clear that progressivism in India could hardly count upon Keshub as one of its champions.

The next two acts of Keshub were as unpredictable as any of his former acts had been. His enthusiasm for Christ had earned him many English admirers and his visit to England in 1870 was accorded the distinction of his being received by the Queen herself. But his Christian friends began to be gradually estranged from him on learning that he was not going to recognise Christ as a mere man of God as the Unitarian Christians believed, and that, with all his enthusiasm for Christ, he was not ready either to subscribe to the orthodox Christian doctrine of Christ's being a member of the Trinity. In short, he alienated Unitarians and Trinitarians alike.
Even the extent of his supposed deviation was revealed in 1872. In that year was passed the Brahmo Marriage Act, which required an explicit declaration of being a non-Hindu, from any one performing the marriage sacrament with rites that did not wholly conform to those customary in a Hindu marriage. Keshub had been at least partially instrumental in the promulgation of the Act, and he did not flinch from its implication in regard to Brahmo marriage rites. He renounced Hindu society with a bang, and seemed to imply, in the most unmistakable manner, that the mockery of clinging to the Hindu fold as Devendranath and his followers did cling to that fold whilst the generality of Hindus were vociferous in repudiating them, was not for him.

The 'progressives' in his camp were in a dilemma. Was not this last act of Keshub a supreme act of progressivism? He had given the lie to his accusers' calumny of being unduly partial to Hinduism. He had taken the final plunge, from which even the most radical amongst them had flinched. Would he remain steadfast in this stance of progressivism? Would he go on championing their cause? The progressives in Keshub's faction became bemused.

But in 1875, Keshub was introduced to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, The 'Saint of Dakshineswar' was a rustic, in whose upbringing English education had no role whatsoever to play. But he was a man of God all right. He preached the
truth of all religious, whilst remaining true to his own in a manner, to which even the most orthodox amongst Hindus could not object. The discussion on religion and how to lead a religious life dedicated to the one aim of realising God, was his only pastime. Indeed, it was his only occupation, from which he gained no worldly advantage, apart from receiving his meals by the generosity of the trustees of the Dakshineswar Temple, who paid for his keep as a sort of a permanent guest. He performed no miracles, and in fact, professed his inability to perform any. He spoke the sweetest Bengali, but not without a generous sprinkling of rustic words. He went into innumerable fits of Samadhi, the trance like state in which the devotee was supposed to remain in God's presence, as long as the fit persisted. But whether in Samadhi or in the consciousness of the waking state, Ramakrishna seemed to be equally in God's presence - singing, dancing and gossiping away his waking hours by discussing God and the life of religion. He was childlike in his simplicity, cheerful in the manner of gay Bohemians, tender as a mother to young disciples, and sombre as a Hebrew prophet in his denunciation of worldliness. Even Devendranath Tagore had been sufficiently impressed by him to invite him to a Brahmo festival, but had withdrawn the invitation at the last moment out of a fear that Ramakrishna would disagree the distinguished gathering by appearing in his scanty Bohemian clothings.

Keshub immediately took to this extraordinary man in the manner a 'dope-addict takes to another', and there grew

---

1. The simile is from Ramakrishna. He compared the religious man's craving for religious companionship to the hashis-addicts.
up between them a friendship which lasted until Keshub's death. Keshub wrote of Ramakrishna in the columns of his English paper and made the rustic saint's name famous amongst the English educated public of Calcutta.¹

Keshub's progressive followers did not grasp the significance of this friendship at once. The significance, indeed, was not easily understandable, and, to this day, it has remained controversial how far Keshub was influenced by Ramakrishna and how far the latter's celebrity and the course of events it brought in its wake were due to the publicity he obtained amongst the English-educated public through Keshub's influence. It is possible that but for Ramakrishna's connection with the Brahma Samaj Narendranath Datta, later Swami Vivekananda, would never have met him. It is possible that, but for this connection, Mahendranath Gupta, the chronicler of Ramakrishna's later days would never have heard the saint's name. What would have remained of Ramakrishna and his name, if we allow for these possibilities, is anybody's guess. One thing is, however, certain. Keshub was gradually drifting away from public life, into the solitude of his own self, the self of a religious seeker absorbed in the contemplation of his saviour. It is fruitless to enquire how far Ramakrishna was responsible for this.

¹ "We met one (a sincere Hindu devotee) not long ago, and were charmed by the depth, penetration and simplicity of his spirit. The never ceasing metaphors and analogies in which he indulged, are most of them as apt as they are beautiful. The characteristics of his mind are the very opposite to those of Pandit Dayananda Saraswati, the former being as gentle, tender and contemplative as the..."
However an event occurred in 1878, which brought about the second schism in the Brahmo Samaj and Keshub's reputation as a progressive social reformer became permanently damaged. In that year Keshub gave one of his daughters in marriage to the Maharaja of Gooch-Behar. The girl was of minor age, and it was against well-known Brahmo principles, avowed by Keshub himself on many occasions, to arrange the marriage of minor children. By this act of his, therefore, Keshub not only violated one of his own principles, but it was further alleged that he had allowed the marriage to get polluted by a mixture of Hindu and Brahmo rites. The allegation was possibly not wholly true. What had actually happened during the marriage ceremony seemed to be a case of forcible imposition of some Hindu rites by the members of the Rajah's family. However, the incident was enough to provoke the long-suppressed anger of Keshub's progressive followers to the bursting point. They raised a hue and cry in the columns of their newspapers and accused Keshub of allowing his interest to get the better of his principles. Keshub rejoined by asserting a clean conscience that took orders from God alone and was inspired by an 'inner voice' that guided him in every action, not excluding his daughter's marriage. The 'progressives' at once broke off all connection with him and founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, which was set up on

latter is sturdy, masculine and polemical. Hinduism must have in it a deep source of beauty, truth, and goodness to inspire such men as these." (Keshub in the Indian Mirror, 28 March, 1875). Quoted by Dr. Prem Sundar Basu in 'Life and Works of Brahmananda Keshub.' p.318.
vigorous and unfailing progressive principles, with a democratic constitution, an elaborate apparatus of rules— in short, with anything and everything that was in strict conformity with the most fastidious radical conscience.

At all events, the doctrine Keshub began to preach from now on was far more concerned with spiritual culture and mystic communion with God than with social reform. This doctrine he called 'The New Dispensation', implying, by this somewhat pompous title, that it was a direct revelation from God and was not to be confounded with the rationalistic worship of a formless God advocated by the generality of English-educated Brahmos. The severe strain involved in preaching this new doctrine and rallying behind him a new band of followers, - now that his most eminent disciples had deserted him, - broke his health, and Keshub died prematurely at the age of forty-five years (January, 1884).

Before concluding this brief summary of Keshub's life, we should say a few words as to its significance in the context of the religious movements of his time. Keshub chandra Sen symbolised, to a pre-eminent degree, the spiritual unrest of the religious seekers of the 1870s. Starting his career as a social reformer in the conservative - or rather, cautiously reformistic - Brahmo Samaj of Devendranath Tagore, he was in the end repudiated by conservatives and radicals alike owing to his gradual absorption of ideas and practices which were repugnant to the spirit of European Rationalism imbibed.
by the English-educated Calcuttans of his age. Keshub's was a restless mind,¹ and the New Dispensation, which was calculated to be the finished edifice, embodying all the materials he had collected during a whole life-time, was a hotch-potch of disconnected ideas - an inchoate mass of spiritual divinations, which failed to survive their author. The eclecticism which combined the worship of the formless (unitarian) God of the early Brahmos with Vaishnavite methods of rousing religious ecstasy and, at the same time, advocated a sort of divinity for Christ, failed to be convincing because of its own extravagance. Not content with the multifariousness of this fare Keshub accentuated the extravagance by adding to these constituents the doctrine of Inspiration or Inner Voice, the theory of a new species of Yoga, the creed of an order of Saints or Great Men, and many more dogmas of the same kind. Keshub's religion was a conglomeration of diverse religious beliefs derived from diverse religious sources, and met the fate common to all such eclectic religions. But the uniqueness of Keshub's religion lay in this; the coat of many colours he strove to weave during

1. Sir Henry Maine had said that the creed of the Brahmos lacked stability; he had ascertained this by frequent conversations with Mr. Sen, their leader: P.C. Mojamdar; Life & Teachings of Keshub Chandra Sen, p.157.

2. In a letter to Sophia Dobson Collet (May 31, 1881), Rajnarayan Bose by way of criticising Keshub wrote: "Keshub Baboo prides himself on his New Dispensation. There is not, however, the least originality in the ideas as the name implies. The New Dispensation consists in merely jumbling up the doctrines & dogmas, the forms and ceremonies of different religions explaining the fancied allegorical meaning contained in those doctrines & worshipping saints & great men. The idea is not a new one - in our country."
his life time was not tailored to suit the whims of a restless intellect, but was dyed by a burning 'private' vision whose hunger for all the colours of the religious spectrum seemed to be imperious and insatiable. This was the reason why he gripped the imagination of his contemporaries with such irresistible force, and this again was the reason why he was forgotten so soon after his death. Keshub Chandra Sen represented an interregnum of acute religious uncertainty, which, if it were not to be followed by a period of stability, would bring in its wake consequences that could be disastrous to the rising generation.

(B) Bijoy Krishna Goswami (1841-1899):

If Keshub Chandra Sen, in the unpredictability of his continuously developing religious viewpoint and the inconclusiveness of the conclusions reached by a life-time effort primarily represents the religious uncertainty of the seventies, Bijoy Krishna Goswami represents the force of the orthodox tradition in a strikingly unorthodox manner. Keshub's work may be viewed as a continuous protest against orthodoxy, not alone the old time-honoured orthodoxy of pre-historic Hinduism but also the orthodoxy of Rammohan's religion as well as the temporary orthodoxies punctuating his own religious life. Bijoy Krishna Goswami, despite his apparent resemblance to Keshub in the restlessness of his religious quest was a man of a very different stamp. Like Keshub, he certainly changed his religious ground oftener than is congenial for consistent seekers, but unlike Keshub, his
shiftings were not motivated by a thirst for variety in religious experiences but by a steadfast desire for union with God. Born in an extremely conservative Vaisnav family of Santipur tracing its descent from Sri Chaitanya's celebrated friend and disciple Advaitacharya, Bijoy had reached adolescence in an atmosphere of extreme orthodoxy. But it was a religious atmosphere none the less, instilling in Bijoy a sensitive regard for truth and honesty, a thirst for religion and above all a desire for devotional life. In his boyhood, he was equipped with all the virtues of an orthodox Hindu. He was given the sacred thread and was initiated according to family customs. On coming to age, he took up his ancestral profession of a Guru and devoted himself to the worship of the family deities. An incident connected with his profession changed the whole course of his life. On one occasion, while in one of his disciples' house, an old woman prostrated herself before him crying for salvation. Bijoy's conscience responded at once and he felt that his own salvation being far far from ensured, he could not be a spiritual preceptor who was supposed to be a guide for spiritual attainment and salvation. He at once threw up his hereditary vocation as a Guru and sought an answer to his query from Vedantic studies. The Vedantic study of the Samkara School demolished his old faith in popular Hinduism and the worship of the popular Hindu Gods and Goddesses could not appeal to him any more. But this school also failed to offer any solace to his struggling soul athirst for a loving
I

communion with his Maker. He became exceedingly restless. He was drawn at this stage to the Brahmo Samaj by some of his old acquaintances. The atmosphere at the Samaj attended by a host of devotees engaged in prayer, recitation and singing of hymns devoutly touched him very much. He listened to a sermon delivered by Devendranath Tagore and he returned home a new man.1

But this new man came into conflict with the sanctified traditions of his family, his caste and his community. He threw away his Brahmanical thread in the belief that wearing a sacred thread was contrary to the Brahmo principle of castelessness. Of course, the penalty he received was severe—he was excommunicated by his relatives at Santipur. There was a good deal of persecution, but he bore it all with modesty and humility and not with the arrogance common amongst persecuted social reforms.

But, none the less, Bijoy's career up to the year 1878, was a story of a number of significant reforms in the best style of progressive social reformers. He was possibly the first Brahmo to sacrifice his Brahmanical thread. He was certainly the first to agitate against Devendranath Tagore's propensity to compromise with Brahmo priests who were stubborn in retaining such threads. He was the first among Keshub's associates to protest against their leader's

inclination towards Avatarhood. It was possibly his initiative more than anyone else's that gave rise to a democratic opposition in the years when Keshub tended to rule his congregation like an autocrat. Last but not the least, it was his voice which rang the loudest in declaring against Keshub's compromise with child-marriage when the child concerned happened to be his own daughter. But side by side with these reforming acts, Bijoy from his early days had been giving indications of a burning desire for communion with God. The psychological state which Vaishnavas of the school of Chaitanya designate as Arti (passionate longing for communion with God) had been evident in him on more than one public occasion when the English-educated congregation had been startled by his heartrending cries for his remaining divorced from his God. It was he who had composed the texts of the songs sung in Keshub's first public venture at Nāgar-Sankirtan. But these had been mere ripples in an ocean of God-intoxication, of which the surface had never indicated the tempest within his soul during all his years of association with Keshub. Keshub's own flirtation with Vaishnavism during and after the so-called 'influx of Bhakti' phase of his religious life, had made room for such ripples in the otherwise still waters of Brahmo piety. But Bijoy's true bent, - shut out of sight by years of devotion to the cause of social reform, - came out in the open no sooner had he started work as a preacher (Pracharak) in the Sadharana Brahmo Samaj. This body was supposed to be
primarily an organ of progressive social reform with even less tolerance for piety of the passionate type than the 'Samaj' of Devendranath Tagore. Sibnath Sastri, one of the leaders of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, had actually suggested to Sri Ramakrishna that excessive devotion to God was the shortest way to lunacy. On this reckoning, Bijoy's case was hopeless. Within a few years of his association with Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, (he was, in fact, one of the founding fathers of that body), Bijoy began to betray unmistakable symptoms of the type of lunacy deplored by Sibnath.

It happened like this: For sometime past Bijoy had been frequenting the religious centres of a great number of obscure Hindu sects. There has never been any dearth of such sects in India, and these sects prescribe fantastic religious exercises for the realisation of God. Some of them require the taking of human excreta as the religious culture best serving the cause of God-realisation; some advocate the creed of wine and women; some require devotees to eat the flesh of human corpses. Bijoy visited all these centres, only to return disillusioned by the sort of exercises recommended by these sects for a communion with God. But meanwhile the sermons he delivered from the pulpit of the Brahmo Samaj were becoming occasions of an unprecedented religious ecstasy. Bijoy would often end a sermon by a
passionate address to the Mother of the Universe, and his cry: "Mother, oh Mother" would affect his listeners with its profound intensity. This was bad enough. But what was infinitely worse was the visit to Bijoy's pulpit by a Sannyasin. His conversation with Bijoy ended by making the latter lost to the cause of Brahmoism. Bijoy became restless to make the Sannyasin his Guru.

The Sannyasin declined. "It is pre-ordained that you'll meet your Guru elsewhere"—he said mysteriously. Bijoy now began to roam from place to place in search of his pre-ordained Guru. He visited Darjeeling and met a sage who had pierced the six chakras, but was again rebuffed by the same mysterious reply. He visited Gaya, a place sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists, and prostrated himself before the celebrated Babaji of Akashyanga Hill. The impression enough by the Babaji was not his pre-ordained Guru. But he was impressed enough by Babaji's longing for God's communion to donate him his own solitary retreat for spiritual culture. In this retreat Bijoy lay unconscious in his restlessness on a certain day, to be roused by the touch of a stranger, who startled him by sundry revelations about his own life, and thereupon gave him spiritual lessons that would lead him direct to his God. The stranger, it appeared, was in his subtle body, coming all the way from Tibet, to give solace to the bleeding heart of Bijoy. He was, in short, the pre-ordained Guru.
From this day on opened a new career for Bijoy, in which the occurrence of many miracles of the sort foreshadowed in the above incident, has made the scientific historian's task difficult in treating his later development with any amount of confidence. However, Bijoy now gathered around him a flock of disciples, most of them Hindus and only a handful of them Brahmos. He was expelled from the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in 1886. The charges against him were, firstly, his insistence on Gurus as spiritual guides; secondly, his encouraging the habit of prostration before idols and particular individuals; thirdly, his practice of referring to the love of Radha and Krishna as an ideal of the worshipper's devotion to his God; fourthly, his propensity to baptise people by uttering Mantras, and finally, his uncritical acceptance of certain doctrines or rules of conduct because of the supposed sanctity of a book or a person prescribing such doctrines or such rules of conduct. Bijoy defended his conduct by asserting purity of motive and explaining away all the charges by a somewhat liberal interpretation of the Brahmo creed but tendered his resignation as a preacher (Pracharak) of the Samaj all the same. His following was already large enough to start him on an independent religious career of his own.

Bijoy's subsequent activities can be briefly described. Without actually enrolling himself as a member of the school of Chaitanya, he practised the mode of spiritual culture known as Madhura Bhava (in which the devotee looks upon his
God as the Divine Spouse) and ended his days by unremitting spiritual labour for the liberation of his disciples. His later career was one of exceptional piety, numerous good works and extreme humility. It is obvious that such a man would be constantly surrounded by disciples, although it is questionable whether he would attract a large number of 'progressive' disciples as Keshub Chandra is said to have done to the end of his days. Indeed, the rationalist Bipin Chandra Pal has told us that though he had received Mantra from Bijoy Krishna, he "kept himself aloof from Bijoy's association because he found it difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate himself to the atmosphere of mediaeval faiths and ideals which many of his Hindu disciples created around him."1 But however mediaeval they might be in their outlook, during his later days Bijoy Krishna never suffered from a dearth of disciples. When he died in 1899, he was already recognised as an Avatar by a great number of his followers.

In summing up the life and works of Bijoy Krishna Goswami, we should note that he was very much a child of the seventies in the unrest of his soul which no existing sect or creed could extinguish. This gains added significance from the fact that unlike Keshub, Bijoy had never received the benefit of an English education. Thus his break with his orthodox past indicated a deeper spiritual craving than was the case with the generality of the English-educated Hindus, whose dissatisfaction with their ancestral religion

was actuated more by a desire to look civilised to their English masters than by any spiritual urge of their own. What is more significant still, is the fact that Bijoy Krishna, to the end of his days, remained steadfast in acknowledging his debt to the Brahmo Samaj. This makes the marked Hinduisation of his later development a much more remarkable phenomenon than it would ordinarily be. In his own words, the association with the Brahmo Samaj, salutory as it was, "failed to quench the thirst of his soul." His later Hinduisation has therefore to be viewed as no nostalgia for the fold he had wilfully deserted. Indeed, it is questionable whether he returned to the fold at all, considering the conflicting claims made by his Hindu and Brahmo disciples in regard to the significance of his later development.

His Hinduisation was actually a prelude to a higher synthesis - a synthesis that was evolving slowly and steadily during his later years.

(C) **Religious Chauvinism**

A significant aspect of the religious scene in the 1870s was the efforts of Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni and his circle towards the defence of orthodox Hinduism. The circle formed by Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni and his disciples were notable neither for exceptional piety nor for scholarship of any very superior kind. The celebrity - they enjoyed for a while was ephemeral, and, was due more to a historical reason than to any positive achievement of...
their own. The historical reason, in this case, was not, as in the Kestfub and Bijoy, a dissatisfaction with the religion of their adoption, namely Brahmoism. The historical reason operative in this case was of a very different kind. This was nothing less than the need to answer the challenge of the Enlightenment of the West - or rather an aspect of that Enlightenment which questioned the rationality of Hindu beliefs and customs. Brahmoism as a reform movement, had addressed itself to removing the immoral customs associated with Hinduism; but had by no means neglected the question of rationality of beliefs. We have noted later (chapter IV) what Brahmo leaders from Rammohan to Keshub Candra had done towards answering that question and how the inadequacy of that answer prompted the New Hindu Bankim towards a reformulation of that answer. But between Keshub and Bankim loomed the figure of Sasadhar whose efforts in the same direction have to be recorded here if only because Bankim's reformulation followed in close succession to Sasadhar's.

Another reason for including Sasadhar in this discussion is that he, no less than Bankim and, in later years Vivekananda and Rabindranath, attempted to answer the charge - implicit in the spread of Western Enlightenment in India - that Hindus had no civilisation properly so-called and that their tardiness in achieving the wholesale Westernization of the race was only a symptom of their backwardness. It is true that Sasadhar's answer, both in its rationalistic aspect as well as in its glorification of Hindu civilization was extremely
unsatisfactory. However, a preliminary examination of Sasadhar's views would help us in our understanding of the New Hindu approach to both these questions. The New Hindu search for a Rational Faith and for the civilisation of the Hindus cannot be fully understood without taking note of the particular activities of Sasadhar and his circle.

Briefly stated, the movement instituted by Sasadhar and his circle was an apology for Hindu orthodoxy, clothed in a pseudo-religious, pseudo-historical garb. It was the contention of this circle that orthodox Hinduism had possessed everything that was supposed to be the gift of the 'advanced' civilisation of the nineteenth century West. The following extract from a lecture delivered in the Albert Hall in 1875, will indicate the method of Tarkachudamani and his disciples:

"Many people believe" so runs the extract, "that the ancient Indian heroes appeared in the battlefields with bows and arrows, swords and clubs and other devices of a primitive sort. They presume that the science of warfare in which our forefathers were instructed is to put to shame when judged by the standard of modern artillery and the sophisticated arms employed in modern wars. But readers of the Ramayana know better." 1

This supposed superiority of knowledge is illustrated by a verse from the epic which is used to prove the employment of artillery by the monkey soldiers of Ramchandra. The evidence from the epic is sought to be strengthened by such bits of information as that of the big artillery gun in

---

1. Paribrajaker Baktrita: Compilation of lectures by Krishnananda Swami.
ancient India having been known as 'Sataghni', the shell as 'Gudaka' and so forth. To clinch the matter we are lastly supplied with the decisive detail that the Indian inventor of Gunpowder was 'Urba' - a venerable Rishi, and, of course, a scientist of unexampled magnificence.

It is obvious that here we are face to face with a type of mentality which confused religion with national glory and conjured up visions of national glory by playing upon emotions excited by fantastic old wives' tales, rather than by sober accounts of authenticated history. The mentality is instructive for more reasons than one. The sense of national humiliation of a subject race which looks for comfort in its ancient achievements is of course implicit in this mentality. But so far as Tarkachudamani and his circle was concerned the mentality did not have any political overtone. The significant fact to note is that orthodoxy in its battle with religious innovations was adapting its antiquated arms to the requirements of the new age. Instead of appealing to scriptural texts it was appealing to history, or rather, to what it took for history. It was speaking of ancient India's military prowess and her achievements in science and technology. No doubt its sense of history was all wrong. No doubt its confidence in the ancient Indian's scientific achievements was grounded on extremely insecure foundations. But rightly or wrongly it was now adopting unorthodox means to fight its own battle. Orthodoxy, since the time of Rammohan had taken
the sanctity of scriptural texts and the supposed immemoriality of orthodox customs as the twin pillars of its defence. But the education of the Hindu College had made short work of both these pillars. Pandit Sasadhar and his circle set out to surprise the enemy in its own camp. If European Rationalism was the greatest enemy of orthodoxy, it must be fought by a species of Rationalism itself — this was how the circle argued. It was an admirable strategy, — the only strategy, in fact, that would suit the circumstances. Unfortunately for the strategists they failed to distinguish between rationalism and pseudo-rationalism.

1) Sasadhar Tarkachudamani (1851-1928):

Pandit Sasadhar was born in an orthodox Brahmin family. His education was of the orthodox Brahmanical type, being wholly free from the contamination of English or Western ideas. When he was twenty-three years old (the Bengali year 1280 i.e., sometime during late 1872 or early 1873), he was appointed Pandit in the pay of Annadaprasad Roy, zamindar of Kasimbazar. It was under the patronage of this zamindar that Sasadhar started his career as a preacher of Hinduism. It is said that 'his heart cried out' at the spectacle of his religion and society being ridiculed and reviled by some of his own correlegionists whose judgement, he assumed, was perverted by a little English education. They had been declaring that the customs and rites of the Hindus were superstitious and barbarous. Sasadhar happened
to be at Monghyr sometime during the latter half of 1870s, where he made the acquaintance of another gentleman, whose heart in its turn, (so we are told) was 'crying out' like Sasadhar's and for a similar reason. He was no other than Paribrajak Krishnaprasanna Sen, later Sreemat Krishnananda Swami. They started lecturing in Calcutta and surrounding places, founding, to begin with, the Arya Dharma Pracharini Sabha in Monghyr. In district and sub-divisional towns, in villages, and, in fact, in every possible place they set up societies for the protection of religion (the so-called Dharma Rakhini Sabha) and other societies of a similar nature. To win over the hearts of the youths they set up societies with such pompous titles as Suniti Sancharini Sabha (Societies for the inculcation of good morals), Balyasram and so forth. In a word, Sasadhar and Krishnaprasanna started a crusade against the benighted atheists and de-Hinduised Brahmos coming out every year from the centres of English learning in Calcutta.

Posterity has failed to remember Sasadhar and Krishnaprasanna as well as the movement started by them. Considering the commonplace nature of their ideas and their hostility to the new religious conscience which was profoundly influenced by English education, the judgment of posterity seems but natural. But that Sasadhar and Krishnaprasanna, between them evidently held the Calcutta religious stage for a period, however short. Rabindrenath Tagore, in his Jeevan Smriti, refers to Sasadhar
and his rise to fame. Characteristically Tagore does not mention any date. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee refers to Sasadhar's movement in 1884. Navin Chandra Sen, the celebrated Bengali poet of the age, devotes a whole section of his autobiography to the mode of Sasadhar's preaching. He puts the date of his acquaintance with some of Sasadhar's preachers somewhat vaguely between the years 1883 and 1884. But Paribrajak Krishnaprasanna's Albert Hall Lecture, from which we have already cited an extract, is dated as early as 1875, and we are told explicitly by a disciple of Sasadhar's that his movement started with their (his and Krishnaprasanna's) joint collaboration in the religious preaching at Monghyr, from where the wave spread to Calcutta which was thereupon made the headquarters of the movement. The same disciple also tells us that the movement lasted for about ten years. We can therefore put the date of Sasadhar's work in Calcutta, with some confidence between the years 1875 and 1885. That the work created a considerable stir is evident from what follows.


2. Ibid.
In the first place, the efforts of Sasadhar and Krishna-prasanna gave rise to much uneasiness amongst the Brahmos. Rajnarain Bose, the then President of the Brahmo Samaj led by Devendranath Tagore thus wrote to his counterpart of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (the radical faction founded in 1878): "If you do not preach your religion in accordance with Hindu ideals, the events of Monghyr will be repeated elsewhere: the Arya Sabhas will supersede the Brahmo Samaj everywhere."¹

In the second place, Sasadhar was in great request amongst the contemporary English-educated intellectuals of Calcutta like Jogendra Chandra Bose, Indranath Banerjee, Bhudev Mukherjee, Akshoy Chandra Sarkar, Chandranath Bose, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi.² The saint of Dakshineswar who was daily growing in fame in those days paid him a visit on his own and likened him to the waxing moon of the second lunar day. As the moon on that date waxes at her palest, the compliment seemed to be a dubious one; but the saint, gave it an interpretation which was calculated to puff the Pandit with vainglory. He invented a yarn to the effect that Sita had once likened Ravana to the moon at the full and Ram to the moon of the second lunar day. Ravana in his foolhardiness took the comparison for a great compliment in his favour.

---

1. Quoted in Paribrajaker Baktrita, 3rd edition, p. 1332 B.S. The first edition of the book was published in 1816 Saka, i.e., 1894 A.D.
2. loc.cit. As Ramendra Sundar Trivedi was too young during the period 1875-85, his acquaintance with Sasadhar does not seem to have taken place before the nineties.
whereas it had actually been meant to convey the fact that his fame would henceforth be waning whilst Rama's would go on increasing. Just the same was the case with Sasadhar, declared Ramakrishna. But the fact that the Saint was not being prophetic but merely sarcastic, becomes clear when we remember that the comparison was made in 1884, since when the moon of Sasadhar's fame began to flicker and wane. It had actually reached on the full moon phase by that date and would grow no more.¹

But the most notable event in Sasadhar's career was his acquaintance with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the doyen of the English educated intellectuals of Nineteenth Century Bengal. The latter's acquaintance with Sasadhar seems to have taken place sometime between the closing months of 1882 and the early ones of 1883, when Bankim was involved in a bitter controversy² with W.W. Hastie, the then Principal of the General Assembly's Institution of Calcutta over the latter's attack on Hinduism. It was but natural that Sasadhar would be flattered by receiving an invitation from such a man, and temporarily it added to his own fame. Sasadhar's introduction to English-educated Bengal is said to have been due to Bankim.³ It has even been suggested by some latter-day admirers of Sasadhar that Bankim's

2. Infra Chapter-III.
own religious views were influenced by Sasadhar's rationalistic discourses.\textsuperscript{1} Whether this be true or not, the courtship between the orthodox Pandit and the English-educated intellectual appears to have been a short-lived one. In the opening number (1884) of \textit{Prachar}, Bankim's organ for expressing his religious opinions occurred a footnote which purported to convey Bankim's profound disagreement with Sasadhar's mode of interpreting religion and his conviction that such a mode could have no lasting influence.\textsuperscript{2} Bankim's remark happened to be prophetic, for the moon of Sasadhar's fame was already waning. The first volume of 'Dharma Byakhyya' his magnum opus; was published in the same year, and from the evidence left to us, it appears that the projected second volume never saw the light of the day.

But before discussing the mode of interpreting religion which had roused such enthusiasm that even Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was temporarily affected by it we must notice two other events of Sasadhar's career. Sometime in 1884, Ramesh Chandra Dutt who was engaged in publishing his translation of the \textit{Rigveda}, wrote in a Bengali periodical an article which vindicated the European Indologists' view of the earliest literary production of the Hindus as being a work of human agency, incorporating the history of a people in the infancy of its civilisation. This article roused Sasadhar's orthodox

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Brahman-Samaj : Falgun, 1334 B.S. Vide essay by Panchanan Tarkaratna.
\item Bankim Chandra : 'Hindudharma', \textit{Prachar} 1, pp.15-23.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
conscience and he in his turn, took up the pen to denounce Ramesh Dutt for his apostacy and his skepticism regarding the revealed nature of the Vedas. Sasadhar's article had unforeseen consequences. Without any prompting from Romesh Dutta a number of progressive youngmen took up his cause and manhandled the orthodox preacher in the middle of a lecture he was delivering in the Sanskrit College of Calcutta. As for Sasadhar, the incident put a damper on his religious enthusiasm. His passion for lecturing lost its fire, and he allowed his movement to die a natural death.

But not before a gigantic attempt at revival in 1891. In that year was passed an Act which sought to give some protection to child wives in Hindu society against forcible attempts by Hindu husbands at consummating their marriage before their wives had reached puberty. But with the introduction of the Bill his orthodox conscience was roused again, and he mounted a country-wide agitation to prevent its acceptance. His agitation failed, but not before causing a redrafting of the Bill, so that when the Bill became an Act, the difficulty in executing its provisions made it a virtual dead letter. Sasadhar rounded off his career in orthodoxy with this act of unparalleled infamy. He lived for many more years but his public life came to a close with this event of 1891.

1. Infra Chapter VII.
What was this method of religious interpretation which made Sasadhar temporarily so popular even amongst the English-educated Hindus? One of Sasadhar's disciples has called it 'the scientific interpretation of Hinduism.' He has found fault with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's repudiation of Sasadhar's 'method', because, in his opinion, Bankim himself in his religious writings followed the same method. We shall discuss Bankim's method in its proper place, but as regards Sasadhar it has to be noted that as this Pandit of the old School was innocent of science and its method his method should more properly be called 'rationalistic.' It was in fact pseudo-rationalistic as we shall try to show below, but Sasadhar did seem to his admirers to be engaged in an attempt at rendering the doctrines and rituals of orthodox Hinduism acceptable to reason without any appeal to the 'supersensible.' Thus he sought to justify the religious fasting observed by orthodox Hindus on every 11th lunar day (Ekadasi) by an appeal to considerations of health. This was, no doubt, puerile since the argument, while it might serve the cause of hygiene, hardly served the cause of religion. But English-educated Hindus were fascinated by Sasadhar's naturalistic definition of religion, which did not base the validity of religious truths on scriptural revelation, but sought to define religion as a sort of 'humanism.' The analogy used by Sasadhar in

1. Tarkachudamani, Sasadhar: Dharma-bakhya.
connection was that as the Dharma of water was liquidity and that of fire its ability to burn, so the Dharma of man was a property of his 'humanity.' It appears that it was this definition which had appealed to Bankim Chandra's rationalistic temperament and urged him to make the Pandit's acquaintance. Obviously it was a definition in keeping with the spirit of European Rationalism, but Sasadhar's articulation of the 'method' revealed its barrenness. Just as Krishnaprasanna, in his Albert Hall lecture had sought to find the most prodigious scientific achievements amongst the Hindus of the Ramayanic Age, so did Sasadhar discover Darwinism in an aphorism of Patanjali. This was plain chauvinism, but Sasadhar phrased his argument in a form which seemed to involve much philosophic reasoning and proceed from an acutely logical intellect. The nature of Sasadhar's 'pseudo-rationalism' will be clear from an analysis of his proposition that "the complete man can be born in India alone."

Sasadhar sought to establish this chauvinistic proposition by a bit of geographical reasoning. We in India have six whole seasons, with Spring coming in the wake of Winter, Summer following upon Spring, Summer in its turn being followed by the Rains, the Rains preceding Autumn, and Hemanta (late Autumn) coming after Autumn completing a cycle of the most various seasonal fluctuations. According to Sasadhar the European nations have no notion of such variety in the seasonal spectrum. How, under such deprivations, can
those nations* produce the complete man?, asks Sasadhar and ruefully shakes his head.

This is a weird piece of reasoning but Sasadhar the logician anticipates the skepticism of his dull listeners and goes on to make his mighty thought-process transparent:

"The cycle of the six seasons involves a continuous transformation in all the modes by which nature and the five senses (of man) act and react upon each other. It is therefore reasonable that the five senses (of the Indian man) should have an all-round development",

and thereby produce the complete man who cannot help being an exclusively Indian phenomenon. It is in this manner that Sasadhar renders his reasoning fool-proof.

But Sasadhar does not stop here. To rub the lesson in, he resolves the all round development of the Indian man into its constituent parts and goes on explaining this mighty process of development:

"The sweet and unobtrusive heat of Spring, the intense heat of high Summer, the languishment brought about by the cold of early Winter, and the violent shakings of the limbs produced by the cold of mid-Winter - all these varieties of heat have gone towards developing our tactile sense. But what hope is there of such finished development of the tactile sense in countries where there are only two seasons - Summer and Winter?"

Clearly not much, implies Sasadhar but refrains out of modesty from openly saying so.

But Sasadhar continues to sing the glory of India and he now takes up the Indian man's auditory sense.

"Look", he says, "the sharpness you will find in the Indian man's auditory sense is something you will never find in any other nation, whether it be the English nation or the French. It is due to this completeness of the auditory sense that the science and art of music have reached such heights in India."
We have said that Sasadhar's orthodoxy appealed to the English-educated generation of the Seventies by its rationalistic pretensions. Contrariwise, it did not receive unqualified approbation from any and every member of the orthodox school despite its fight for the cause of orthodoxy. Kalibara Vedantabagish was a scholar of the orthodox school and he was skeptical enough of Sasadhar's 'method' to give expression to his doubts by bringing out a rejoinder to Sasadhar's Dharma Vyakhya - namely the treatise which contained such precious gems as the proposition about the completeness of the Indian man. He applied the resources of his superior scholarship to demolish the theory of the supposed Darwinism of Patanjali. He opposed the naturalistic definition of religion as given by Sasadhar on the ground that religion was religion only because its authority derived from extra-human sources - else it would be conditional on the subjective whims of every individual man. He poured ridicule on the hygienic interpretation of Ekadasi, and asserted that the custom was useless apart from its religious sanction. Besides Sasadhar's prolix exercise in pseudo-rationalism Kalibar's short work stands out as a monument of scholarship and good sense. But at the same time it represents orthodoxy in its determined stand against the rationalistic temper of the times.
From the above analysis, we can discern two distinct trends in the religious scene in Bengal in 1870s. The first was an acute spiritual unrest affecting some of the best minds of the generation. It was characterized by a profound dissatisfaction of an earlier generation with orthodox Hinduism now spreading all along the line and becoming quite general. In particular, the dissatisfaction now involved the Brahmo creed itself. In the minds of religious seekers like Keshub Chandra Sen the need was felt for a faith that would show the way to personal illumination. By the end of 1870s even the question of social reform was relegated to the second place by those with whom the religious quest superseded all other questionings.

The second trend of the religious scene was represented by Sasadhar Tarkachudamani and his circle. Their activities were chauvinistic as their movement was an apology for Hindu orthodoxy, clothed in a pseudo-religious, pseudo-historical garb. Even scientific discoveries of the most variety were sought to be associated with an obscure Hindu past.

Mention should here be made that Arya Samaj and Theosophy were straw in the religious wind of the time. But, while Arya Samaj had an appreciable impact in Western India, its impact in Bengal was negligible. Theosophy also created a stir amongst the educated community in Bengal only for a short time. But as these movements bear little or no influence or connection with the New Hindu Movement in Bengal, we refrain from a detailed study of these movements in this work.