



## Socio-Religious Reformation of Raja Rammohan Roy

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**DR.HARISHA H.E.**

**T**he First chief religious reformer of the nineteenth century was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, whose efforts in his chosen field left a deep impression upon contemporary social, political and religious thinking. Ram Mohan Roy was born in a small village named Radhangar in Bengal in the Year 1772. He belonged to a Family of Brahmins, He was a linguist who had mastered Sanskrit, English, Hindi, Persian, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, He made use of his knowledge to study the religious books in each of these languages and thereby he became quite knowledgeable on the subject of religion, He realized that if Hindu religion was to retain its life and strength it must undergo some modification, and it was with this end in view that the Brahmo samaj was established in 1822.

The principles of this society avoided all rigidity, stressing the importance of universal brotherhood and equality and the existence of a single God. In the social sphere Ram Mohan Roy opposed all iniquity, child marriage, sati, bigamy, caste discrimination and the rest of the problems that beset Hindu Society. In the field of religion he could not and did not support the practice of priestly hypocrisy, worship of stone idols, the elaborate rituals, human and other sacrifices made as part of yajna, etc. He pointed out the need for widow remarriage and the education of women.

He did not oppose the western style of education since he was aware that the gulf of scientific learning that existed in Indian society could be filled only by this form of education. He exerted himself for the improvement and advancement of Indian literature and culture. He wanted the

people to restrict themselves to constitutional methods in fighting for their freedom. Brahmo samaj achieved wide popularity among the Bengalis, And after Ram Mohan Roy it was further propagated by such great figures as Devdaranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. After some time the Samaj broke up into two groups on account of differences on basic principles, resulting in the formation of the Adi Brahmo Samaj led by D.N. Tagore and the Brahmo Samaj headed by Keshab Chandra Sen. Later on the Latter became prominent and progressive when such eminent persons as Jagadish Chandra Bose, Bipin Chandra Pal, C.R. Das and Aurobindo Ghose joined it.

### **Brahmo Samaj :**

The main teachings of the Brahmo Samaj can be summed up as enunciated by Devendranath Tagore as follows :

(1) In the beginning there was naught. The one supreme alone existed, He created the whole universe.

(2) He alone is the god of Truth. Infinite wisdom, Goodness and Power Eternal and all pervading. The One without a second (Ekamevadivityam).

(3) In his worship like our salvation in this world and in the next.

(4) Loving Him and doing that which He laeth the constitute His worship.

The Social thought of Brahmo Samaj can be summed up in the following words of Devdaranath, 'He Who desireth the good of mankind must look on others as he looks on himself. It beoves thee to love thy neighbor, since it causes

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thee pain to be hated by another. Thus in all things shalt thou deal with others by comparing them with thyself; for as pleasure and pain affect thee, so do they affect all creatures. Such conduct alone is the means of attaining well-being. He who adores God and loves man, is a saint, Such a man never rejoices in finding fault with men, for man is beloved of him. He is pained by the sight of a fault in others and lovingly does he labour for its Correction. He loves man as man; and owing to that love, is pleased but the sight good, And grieved by the sight of evil in man. Therefore he is unable to proclaim the faults of others with rejoicing.

The satisfaction of the inner spirit, or, in other words, A good conscience, is the unfailing fruit of the practice of righteousness. In this approval of conscience in self is the approval of God. If the inner spirit is satisfied, All sufferings cease. Without the practice of righteousness. The inner spirit is never satisfied. The mind may find enjoyment in the pleasures of the world. but if the conscience is diseased, then even the height of wordly bliss becomes valueless. Therefore, by the practice of righteousness, ye shall preserve a clear conscience, and ye shall abandon all things whereby the satisfaction of the spirit may be marred.”

The Renaissance thinkers advocated a synthetic approach to religion which was followed by contemporary Indian Social thinkers. This tendency was most eloquent in the sayings of Ramakrsiha. It was circulated by his able disciple Vivekananda. The same tendency was again expressed in M.K. Gandhi's evening prayer where he used to recite Qoran and Bible along with Gita. Among the renaissance thinkers Ram Mohan Roy was almost the first to start this synthetic approach to religion. He was equally impressed by Bible, Qoran, Upanishads and Gita. He believed in monotheism and monism thought he failed to distinguish between the two. He was bitterly against sectarianism, superstition and idolatry but he did not repudiate Vedic religion. Like Spinoza he accepted substance as the ultimate reality, but unlike him he considered attributes as much necessary as the substance. Here he was more impressed by Ramanuj and Vaishnava Saints.

#### **Roy's Interpretation of Christ :**

Roy did so separate Jesus's teachings as the essence of Christianity - “These Precepts, separated from the mysterious dogmas and historical records appear to contain not only the essence of all that is necessary to instruct mankind But also the best and the only means of obtaining forgiveness of sins, the favour of God and strength to overcome our passions and to keep his commandments. Roy is rejecting the deity of Christ and accepting an Arian Christianity, That Jesus was no more than a created being, and not the creator, For Roy, the primary argument was that Jesus Christ Betrayed his “natural inferiority of the son to the father”.

(1) The son is dependent on the father & this subject.

(2) The son has submitted his will to the father, and this is in moral union with the father and not identify of being.

(3) He is the mediator and messiah as the fist-born of all creatures. So Roy writers.

“ I regret only that the followers of Jesus, in general, should have paid much greater attention to enquires after his nature than to the observance of his commandments when we are well are that no human acquirement can ever discover the nature even of the most common and visible things and more over that such enquires are not enjoined by the divine revelation.

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