

RELIGION
AND
POLITICAL AWAKENING
IN INDIA



K. P. KARUNAKARAN
Indian School of International Studies



MEENAKSHI PRAKASHAN

MEERUT

:

DELHI

:

CALCUTTA

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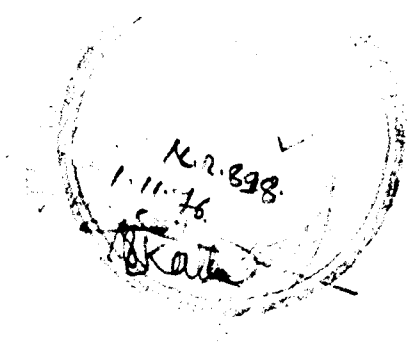
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PREFACE

The interrelation between religion and politics in modern India is so obvious a fact that no student will deny it. But, curiously enough, this is one of the subjects which has not attracted the adequate attention of scholars and students. There are books on various facets of the subject such as *Modern Islam in India*, *The Indian Muslims—a Political Study*, *The Communal Triangle in India* and the *Hindu Renaissance*. But there was no attempt to treat the subject from a comprehensive view-point. Those who worked on political developments had not examined the sociological and historical foundations of the religious element in politics. Broadly speaking, the books on social and religious movements did not deal with their political significance; those which made a reference to it did so in a casual manner. The interrelation between religion and politics in India is, therefore, a virgin and fertile field of study.

The purpose of this monograph is to focus attention on the political significance of the social and religious reform movements of the nineteenth century. These movements made a big impact on the Indian mind at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even contemporary India is not free from their influence. While noting their contribution to the political awakening of the country, the fact that their impact was not always positive is not ignored.

No single book can do justice to the vast subject dealt with here. It is, however, hoped that by raising some questions and putting forward some tentative conclusions this book will be helpful for the beginning of a discussion on one of the very fascinating and complex aspects of modern Indian history. A large number of lengthy documents are added as appendix so as to enable the reader to have direct access to the opinions of those who shaped these social and religious movements.

It is difficult for me to acknowledge the help received

from various individuals and institutions in the preparation of this volume, because their number is very large. For the first time, I developed the underlying theme of this study in a seminar held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. The participants in the discussion threw much light on the subject. Later, I had the privilege of continuing the discussion with some of them through letters. After five years when I expressed the ideas developed in this book in an inter-university seminar convened by the Delhi University on the history of ideas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in India, I received a favourable response. Now I am placing them before a wider public for discussion.

I am extremely grateful to Mrs. Kiran Misra for the able assistance she gave me at different stages. She relieved me of much of the routine work connected with the preparation of the volume for the press and produced an excellent index within a very short time.

NEW DELHI,
10 July 1965.

K. P. KARUNAKARAN.

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	v
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. BEGINNING OF A RE-EXAMINATION OF SOCIAL QUESTIONS	22
3. BRAHMO SAMAJ INAUGURATES A NEW ERA IN RELIGION	40
4. HINDU RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS	58
5. SEPARATE MOVEMENTS AMONG THE MUSLIMS	77
6. CONCLUSION	83
APPENDICES	
A PLEA FOR JUDICIAL REFORM <i>Rammohan Roy</i>	103
FREEDOM OF THE PRESS <i>Rammohan Roy et al.</i>	117
DEMAND FOR ENGLISH EDUCATION <i>Rammohan Roy</i>	124
RIGHTS OF WOMEN <i>Rammohan Roy</i>	127
ISLAM—NEITHER VIOLENT NOR DOGMATIC <i>Syed Ahmad Khan</i>	130
IN SUPPORT OF WESTERN EDUCATION <i>Syed Ahmad Khan</i>	135
MUSLIMS AND THE EARLY PHASE OF THE CONGRESS <i>Mohammed Ali</i>	139

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL REFORMS <i>M. G. Ranade</i>	146
WHY SOCIAL REFORMS <i>R. G. Bhandarkar</i>	153
REVIVAL AND REFORM <i>M. G. Ranade</i>	165
THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL REFORM <i>G. Subramania Iyer</i>	179
A PLEA FOR WIDOW RE-MARRIAGE <i>W. M. Kolhatkar</i>	197
MARRIAGE REFORM AMONG THE HINDUS <i>R. N. Mudholkar</i>	215
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARYA SAMAJ <i>Munshi Ram and Ram Deva</i>	231
POLITICAL OUTLOOK OF ARYASAMAJISTS <i>Hansraj</i>	234
THE WORK OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN INDIA <i>Annie Besant</i>	239
TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL REFORM <i>Vivekananda</i>	252
<i>Bibliography</i>	258
<i>Index</i>	261

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

NO one who knows anything about the political developments of modern India can minimise the importance of the study of the interrelation between religion and politics in the country. The partition of the Indian sub-continent into two states, leading to the formation of Pakistan as a fulfilment of the desire of a section of the Indian Muslims to have a separate state for themselves, was only one of the major events underlining the fact that religion had played a major part in Indian politics. There have been other events equally significant, for instance, it will be difficult to separate the political activities of some leaders from their work connected with religious and social reforms. Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) was the first important leader of modern India. He was the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, a religious body, an advocate of the introduction of Western education into India and a pioneer of social reforms like the abolition of *Sati*. He was also India's first constitutional agitator for the freedom of the press and judicial reforms. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), the dominating figure of the Indian national movement in its later phase, was another striking example of the combination of the political leader and the religious and social reformer.

There were a large number of other leaders who, in one way or the other, were connected either with religious questions which had a bearing on politics, or with political matters in which religion played some part. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Mohammad Ali Jinnah were some of the most well-known among these leaders. There were some organisations which fulfilled more or less the same functions as these leaders, like the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Anglo-Mohammedan College at Aligarh (later the Aligarh Muslim University) and the Muslim League. The legacy of some of these individuals and organisations still influence the contemporary political situation in India and Pakistan.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNING OF A RE-EXAMINATION OF SOCIAL QUESTIONS

IN the early phase of the Indian national movement the inter-relation between religion and politics manifested itself in two different directions : one, in the social and religious reform movements which had a political bearing, and the other, in the political movements whose leaders made appeals to the religious traditions of the people and to the social institutions connected with them. The social and religious reform movements came first, and, in one sense, they were a necessary prelude to the political awakening in the country. They, in their turn, were to some extent the product of the political, administrative and other institutions introduced into India by the alien rulers and the economic and social transformation that the country underwent as a result of its contact with the West.

THE WESTERN IMPACT

Acknowledging India's indebtedness to the West, D. P. Mukherji, one of the few scholars who has devoted attention to the study of modern Indian culture, writes : 'All are agreed that India entered into a lease of life in the nineteenth century. The spirit of vitality came from the West through various channels like commerce and trade, increased facilities for communication, Western learning, administration, unity, etc. For the first time, historians assert, an alien civilisation impinged upon every detail of Indian life, changed its patterns and created new values. Thus India's wealth ceased to become treasure ; money became capital, goods became commodities, land became a source of monopoly-rent, and the self-sufficiency of rural economy was transformed into the interdependence of urban and world economy. Similarly, the vision of the average Indian, so long closed like that of a frog in the well, was enlarged..... The broad march of the English Constitution, the glory of the French Revolution, the finality of the American War of Independence, the romance of the Italian,

CHAPTER III

BRAHMO SAMAJ INAUGURATES A NEW ERA IN RELIGION

ONE AGE MAKING ITS EXIT

AS in many other spheres, in the religious reform movement also Raja Rammohan Roy was the pioneer. He inaugurated the modern age in India. In the words of his biographer, Sophia D. Collet : 'Rammohan stands in history as the living bridge over which India marches from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future. He was the arch which spanned the gulf that yawned between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science, between despotism and democracy, between immobile custom and a conservative progress, between.....polytheism and.....theism. He was the mediator of his people, harmonising in his own person, often by means of his own solitary sufferings, the conflicting tendencies of immemorial tradition and an inevitable enlightenment... He embodies the new spirit which arises from the compulsory mixture of races and faith and civilisation.....he embodies its freedom of enquiry, its thirst for science, its large human sympathy, its pure and sifted ethics, along with its reverent but not uncritical regard for the past, and prudent...discrimination towards revolt.'¹

Referring to the characteristics of that period in history another author rightly observes : "The essential circumstance of the new age is the coming together of diverse peoples and cultures, the frequency, the intensity and the variety of their contacts being ever on the increase. The need that arises out of this situation is one of synthesis, universalism and unity, to enable men to rise superior to the limitations of localised, parochial, isolated life of the preceding ages. In the India of Rammohan's youth the past was making its exit, leaving on

¹ Quoted by the Rammohan Roy Centenary Committee in "*The Father of Modern India*", Rammohan Roy Commemoration Volume (Calcutta, 1935), 89.

CHAPTER IV

HINDU RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

IN our account of the social and religious reform movements, we have so far noted the influence on them of advanced rationalist ideas. Now we must turn to another aspect, often referred to as "revivalism". It cannot be rigidly maintained that all the "modernist" trends appeared first and the "revivalist" trends later. Broadly speaking, this is true because the modernist movements such as the Brahma Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj and the Aligarh School appeared earlier than the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophist movement. As was noted earlier, each of these movements cannot, however, be exclusively grouped in one category, revivalist or modernist. A movement like the Arya Samaj did spread some of modern ideas, although it had strong revivalist tendencies. It is equally true that movements like the Brahma Samaj were not without elements of revivalism in them. Before examining them individually, we may note some of the general characteristics of the revivalist, and often reactionary, trends and the reasons for their origin.

More than one Indian leader has noted that the earlier reformers believed that they could reconstruct Indian society by mechanically introducing Western ideas and institutions. As Bipin Chandra Pal, once an ardent Brahma Samajist, admitted later: 'In our ardent admiration for Europe, our highest patriotic efforts, however, more or less neglected and ignored the actualities of Indian life and situation. Our patriotism was, therefore, naturally more destructive. Our methods were more revolutionary than evolutionary. And the necessary result was that our highest patriotic activities, whether in the field of religion, or social or political reconstruction, were without that historic continuity which alone could furnish strength and vitality to them. The very exuberance of this patriotism was bound to bring on a violent reaction, and it came presently in the shape of a strong social and

SEPARATE MOVEMENTS AMONG
THE MUSLIMS

RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIAN ISLAM

WHILE these intellectual and reform movements were shaking Hindu society to its foundations, the Indian followers of Islam were also experiencing something similar. Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was the outstanding Muslim leader of the nineteenth century who was strongly in favour of Indian Muslims accepting Western culture and reconstructing their social and religious life in accordance with it. It is significant that he also based his reforms on religious books. In the field of religion he undertook to show the basic similarity of Islam and Christianity, and hence to advocate a reconciliation of their followers. He wrote defending social intercourse with Christians and justified the point theologically. More daring, he published a study of the Bible, beginning with a sympathetic commentary, and—against the dogma that it had been corrupted—declaring that it was authentic. By reporting from each religion what is essential and what is accretion, he arrived at the concept of “Religion” itself, as that which is common to all, a practical morality. He himself was genuinely tolerant, deeming that a man’s religion was his private affair which should not be obtruded from and not to be even discussed between those of different faiths, lest friendship be weakened. Even the slightest sign of religious bigotry distressed him.¹

His opposition to miracles and supernatural authority was expressed vigorously in the following manner: ‘.....it has become a habit with men that they ascribe miracles and supernatural attributes to an object or a person whom they consider to be holy or sacred. This is why men have interpolated supernatural factors into Islam, which are not worthy of belief, but such credulous persons believe in them. However, this is

¹ W. C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (London, 1946) 17.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

IN the preceding chapters we noted the political significance of each of the social and religious movements separately. In this concluding chapter we shall try to examine their total political impact and study how these movements have acted and interacted on one another. There are two aspects to their political impact : one connected with the part these apparently religious organisations played in active politics and the other their ideological legacy.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Very often charges were made against religious reform associations like the Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj that they meddled with politics. A member of the Theosophical Society in an open letter to Sir S. Subramania Iyer, one of the prominent leaders of the Society, stated that the Theosophical Society and the Headquarters at Adyar represented an engine of great capacity, a means of propoganda of great power, but this engine had been used, and improperly used, for political propoganda. He narrated, how in his opinion, Annie Besant had used the Society and its organs to promote her political ends. The authorities of the Society did not accept the charge. They were, however, proud to say that the work of the Theosophical Society had contributed to the general awakening in India and that its members in their individual capacity, had a tremendous part to play in the political life of the country. Writing on the work of the Theosophical Society in India, Annie Besant stated : 'To begin : the first Industrial Exhibition was held in Bombay at an early Convention of the Theosophical Society, on the initiative of Colonel Olcott. Until the nation knew what it could produce, it was not possible to revive the national prosperity.... The National Congress was founded by English and Indian Theosophists, working hand-in-hand. The first meeting which suggested it was held at a convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar ; it was under the shelter of the banner of Theosophy,

APPENDICES

A PLEA FOR JUDICIAL REFORM

RAMMOHAN ROY

The following is a report of Raja Rammohan Roy's evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company.

Q. Have you observed the operation of the Judicial System in India ?

A. I have long turned my attention towards the subject, and possess a general acquaintance with the operation of that system, more particularly from personal experience in the Bengal Presidency, where I resided.

Q. Do you think that the system hitherto acted upon is calculated to secure justice ?

A. The judicial system established in 1793, by Lord Cornwallis, was certainly well adapted to the situation of the country, and to the character of the people as well as of the Government, had there been a sufficient number of qualified judges to discharge the judicial office, under a proper code of laws.

Q. Explain particularly in what points you consider the practical operation of the system defective ?

A. In the want of sufficient number of judges and magistrates, in the want of adequate qualification in many of them to discharge the duty in foreign languages, and in the want of proper code of laws, by which they might be easily guided.

Q. Can you explain what evils result from the want of a greater number of Judges ?

A. First, the courts being necessarily few in number in comparison to the vast territories under the British rule, many of the inhabitants are situated at so great a distance from them, that the poorer classes are in general unable to go and seek redress for any injury, particularly those who may be oppressed by their wealthier neighbours, possessing great local influence. Secondly, the business of the courts is so heavy that causes often accumulate to such an extent, that many are necessarily pending some years

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

MEMORIAL TO THE SUPREME COURT BY RAMMOHAN ROY
AND OTHERS

[In 1823 Mr. Buckingham, the proprietor of the *Calcutta Journal* having incurred the displeasure of the Government of Mr. Adam, the then (officiating) Governor-General, was ordered to leave the country, and soon afterwards a Rule and Ordinance was passed on the 14th March 1823, curtailing the freedom of the Press. According to the Act of Parliament, 13 Geo. III, Cap. 63, every regulation made by the Governor-General then required to be sanctioned and registered by the Supreme Court before it passed into law (a provision since repealed by Sec. 45 of 3 and 4 Wm. IV. Cap. 85). Leave was obtained by Mr. Fergusson, Barrister-at-law, on behalf of Mr. Buckingham for protesting against sanction being accorded to the Regulation by the Supreme Court. The matter was heard by Sir Francis Macnaghten. It was for this occasion that this memorial was drawn up and was read before the Court by the Registrar on the 31st of March 1823.]

My Lord, in consequence of the late Rule and Ordinance passed by His Excellency the Governor-General-in-Council, regarding the Publication of Periodical Works, your Memorialists consider themselves called upon with due submission, to represent to you their feelings and sentiments on the subject.

Your Memorialists beg leave, in the first place, to bring to the notice of your Lordship, various proofs given by the Natives of this country of their unshaken loyalty to and unlimited confidence in the British Government of India, which may remove from your mind any apprehension of the Government being brought into hatred and contempt, or of the peace, harmony and good order of society in this country being liable to be interrupted and destroyed, as implied in the preamble of the above Rule and Ordinance.

First, your Lordship is well aware, that the Natives of Calcutta and its vicinity have voluntarily entrusted Government with millions of their wealth, without indicating the least suspicion of its stability and good faith, and reposing in the sanguine hope that their property being so secured, their interests will be as permanent as the British Power itself; while on the contrary, their fathers were invariably compelled to conceal their treasures in the

DEMAND FOR ENGLISH EDUCATION

RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY

The establishment of a new Sangsrit School in Calcutta evinces the laudable desire of Government to improve the Natives of India by Education—a blessing for which they must ever be grateful; and every well-wisher of the human race must be desirous that the efforts made to promote it should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow into the most useful channels.

When this Seminary of learning was proposed, we understood that the Government in England had ordered a considerable sum of money to be annually devoted to the instruction of its Indian Subjects. We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European Gentlemen of talents and education to instruct the natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, and other useful Sciences, which the Nations of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world.

While we looked forward with pleasing hope to the dawn of knowledge thus promised to the rising generation, our hearts were filled with mingled feelings of delight and gratitude; we already offered up thanks to Providence for inspiring the most generous and enlightened of the Nations of the West with the glorious ambitions of planting in Asia, the Arts and Sciences of modern Europe.

We now find that the Government are establishing a Sangsrit School under Hindoo Pundits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This Seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN

RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY

Women are in general inferior to men in bodily strength and energy; consequently the male part of the community, taking advantage of their corporeal weakness, have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature, and afterwards they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. But if we give the subject consideration, we may easily ascertain whether or not your accusation against them is consistent with justice. As to their inferiority in point of understanding, when did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity? How then can you accuse them of want of understanding? If, after instruction in knowledge and wisdom, a person cannot comprehend or retain what has been taught to him, we may consider him as deficient; but as you keep women generally void of education and acquirements, you cannot, therefore, in justice pronounce on their inferiority. On the contrary, Lilavati, Bhanumati, the wife of the prince of Karnat, and that of Kalidas, are celebrated for their thorough knowledge of all the Shastras; moreover in the *Vrihadaranyak Upanishad* of the *Yayur Veda* it is clearly stated, that Yagnavalkya imparted divine knowledge of the most difficult nature to his wife Maitreyi who was able to follow and completely attain it.

Secondly, you charge them with want of resolution, at which I feel exceedingly surprised: for we constantly perceive, in a country where the name of death makes the male shudder, that the female, from her firmness of mind, offers to burn with the corpse of her deceased husband; and yet you accuse those women of deficiency of resolution.

Thirdly, with regard to their trustworthiness, let us look minutely into the conduct of both sexes, and we may be enabled to ascertain which of them is the most frequently guilty of betraying friends. If we enumerate such women in each village or town as have been deceived by men, and such men as have been betrayed by women, I presume that the number of the deceived women

ISLAM—NEITHER VIOLENT NOR DOGMATIC

SYED AHMED KHAN

The remark that 'the sword is the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam', is one of the gravest charges falsely imputed to this faith by the professors of other religions, and arises from the utter ignorance of those who make the accusation. Islam inculcates and demands a hearty and sincere belief in all that it teaches; and that genuine faith which proceeds from a person's heart cannot be obtained by force or violence. Judicious readers will not fail to observe that the above-quoted remark is entirely contrary to the fundamental principles of the Moslem faith, wherein it is inculcated in the clearest language possible: 'Let there be no forcing in religion; the right way has been made clearly distinguishable from the wrong one' (chap. x, 98). And also: 'If the Lord had pleased, all who are on the earth would have believed together; and wilt thou force men to be believers? No man can believe but by the permission of God, and He will pour out His indignation on those who will not understand' (chap. ii, 257).

The principle upon which Moses was allowed to use the sword to extirpate all idolaters and infidels, without exception of one single individual, is by no means applicable to Islam. Mohammedanism grasped the sword, not to destroy all infidels and pagans, not to force men to become Moslems at the sword's point, but only to proclaim that eternal truth, the unity of the Godhead, throughout the whole extent of the then known globe.

According to Islam, the best and the most meritorious act is the preaching and making generally known the existence of one invisible God. It could hardly be expected that, in the infidel countries, there could be sufficient personal security for such Moslems who might choose to inculcate by precept, exhort by preaching and practise openly the worship of the unity of God; and therefore appeal was at once made to the sword in order to establish the superiority of the Moslem power, and to ensure security and tranquillity for such Mohammedans as might choose to

IN SUPPORT OF WESTERN EDUCATION, ART AND SCIENCE

SYED AHMED KHAN

About thirty years have now elapsed since the despatch of 1854. During this period the condition of India has undergone a considerable change. In 1854, when the despatch was written, India was certainly in a condition which might justify our thinking that the acquisition of knowledge through the medium of the vernaculars of the country would be enough to meet our immediate wants. But now such is not the case. Vernacular education is no more regarded as sufficient for our daily affairs of life. It is only of use to us in our private and domestic affairs, and no higher degree of proficiency than what is acquired in primary and middle vernacular schools is requisite for that purpose; nor is more wanted by the country. It is English education which is urgently needed by the country, and by the people in their daily life. We see that an ordinary shopkeeper who is neither himself acquainted with English, nor has any English-knowing person in his employment, feels it a serious hindrance in the progress of his business. Even the itinerant pedlars and boxwalas, who go from door to door selling their articles, keenly feel the necessity of knowing at least the English names of their commodities, and of being able to tell their prices in English. It is high time that Government as well as the people should exert themselves to their utmost in extending this popular education, if I may be allowed so to call it.

In vernacular and English primary and middle schools, the object of which is to impart instruction up to that standard only, and not to prepare scholars for a higher standard of education, the interests of the country will no doubt be furthered by teaching the Western sciences to the standard laid down for those institutions in vernacular. But in English elementary schools, which have been established with the object of serving as a stepping-stone for higher education, the tuition of European sciences through the medium of the vernacular is calculated to ruin the cause of education.

I confess I am the person who had first entertained the idea

MUSLIMS AND THE EARLY PHASE OF THE CONGRESS

MOHAMMED ALI

[Extracts from Maulana Mohammed Ali's Presidential Address at the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress.]

I have referred to the fact that my association with the Congress is of very recent date ; but this admission is not merely personal. It involves the political history of the community to which I belong, and if I give a brief outline of it to you, it is only for the purpose of elucidating a problem which is the most vital of all the problems we have to solve today. When, in 1885, some Indian leaders, assisted by their British sympathisers, founded the Indian National Congress, the Muslims of India did not participate in the movement except in a few individual cases. If their lack of Western education made them unfit to take part in a movement essentially that of the classes educated according to Western notions, their political temper made them an element that was not unlikely to prove dangerous to any political movement. They had already lost the rule of India, but the tradition of that rule had survived. This had increased the aversion they had always felt for the new type of education. The rule of India had finally passed from Muslim into English hands by slow and hardly perceptible degrees in the hundred years that intervened between the battle of Plassey and the Indian Mutiny ; but the Muslims had not ceased to regard the new rulers of India as something very inferior to themselves in civilisation and culture. This storm of ill-will and disdain had been gathering force for a whole century and was at last precipitated in 1857. The Mutiny began near Calcutta as an affair of the Indian Army, but in the storm-centre of Delhi and of my own Province, where it had to be fought out, if English rule was to continue in India, it soon attracted to itself many forms of discontent, and religion was inextricably mixed up with politics. Although so many Muslims had, at enormous risk to themselves, assisted the British at a time when hardly anyone could have

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL REFORMS

M. G. RANADE

During the Sixth Social Conference at Allahabad a public meeting was held on the 25th December, 1892. Mr. M. G. Ranade delivered this address :

Once more we meet in this busy week of December, this time in your historical and holy city, to take stock of our year's achievements, to count our losses and gains, and to pledge ourselves to help each other in the unceasing struggle to better our condition. When from our distant provinces we start on these annual pilgrimages, we are often twitted for our pains by those who take credit to themselves for superior wisdom, and the question is often asked, what mad freak lays hold of so many earnest minds in the country, which leads them to pursue this mirage of national elevation, which recedes further from our grasp the more eagerly we run after it. This same irreverent doubt also weighs down upon some among our own body in our weak moments, and it seems to me very necessary, before we enter upon more serious work, to purify ourselves by the discipline of a rigorous course of self-examination for the struggle. Nothing strikes our critics both European and Native, as more manifestly absurd than this our faith that these annual gatherings will prove helpful in attaining the objects we seek. Progress in the art of self-government, both in its national and individual bearings, it is urged by some of our native friends, can never be secured by these half-confused gatherings of races and creeds and interests, and the jumble of tongues, and the tame imitation of methods not our own. Our European critics are more wise in their generation, and some of the wisest among them have demonstrated to their own satisfaction that all Oriental races have had their day, and that nothing is now left to them but to vegetate and die, and make way for their betters. Political elevation and social emancipation, religious or spiritual enlightenment—these gifts have not been and will never be, according to their philosophers, vouchsafed any more to the Indian races. If these black forebodings were really

WHY SOCIAL REFORMS ?*

R. G. BHANDARKAR

About sixty years ago, none among us had any idea of the reform of our society and a Conference such as this was out of the question. But since that time we have come in closer contact with Western civilisation chiefly through the means of English education ; and that has led us to take interest in the concerns of Indian society in general and consider its good to be our good, and has evoked in us feelings of justice and passion for the various classes that compose our society. If then you are animated by these sentiments, the task before us today will present no difficulties. For the end aimed at by the propositions that will be laid before you is justice and fair play to all classes of persons, the alleviation of their sufferings and the removal of obstacles in the free development of our individual activities.

And first, a good many of the proposals have reference to the condition of the female portion of our society. Gentlemen, one-half of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual resources of our country is being wasted. If our women were educated as they ought to be, they would be a powerful instrument for advancing the general condition of our country. They will bring up every new generation in a manner to perform its duty efficiently and will shed the influence of the benign virtues peculiar to them on men and, so to say, humanise them. All the means of educating women, therefore, that have been indicated in the propositions, you will, I feel sure, approve of. You will see that the opening of High Schools is one of them. That necessarily implies that the study of English language and literature is considered to be beneficial to our women. Though there has been some difference of opinion as regards this point, still I believe, the necessity of such education has been recognised by the majority. But I think it still remains an open question whether our ideal for the education of women ought to be the same as that for the education of men—

*Address at the Ninth Social Conference.

REVIVAL AND REFORM*

M. G. RANADE

The reports of this year's work which have been received from nearly sixty associations, large and small, and which have been summarised up to date, complain that their work for the year has not been as successful as in the previous two years. And yet to those who can read between the lines, there are manifest signs which show that the work has been as earnestly pursued as ever. To instance a few cases: Under the head of female education, the Bethuen College of Calcutta, the Girls' High Schools at Poona and Ahmedabad, the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya at Jullundar, the Sing Sabha's Girls' School at Lahore, the Maharani's Girls' School at Mysore, the Mahakali Pathshala organised by the Mataji Tapeswini Bai, a Maratha lady in Calcutta, and the Sylhet and Mymensingh Unions, all show a record of progress each in its own line of development. There is not a single Reform Association of any position in the country which has not lent its best efforts to raise the standard and popularise the system of female education. Many Associations, Sabhas and Samajas maintain independent Girls' Schools of their own, and others have their home classes more or less actively employed in carrying on the work of the schools to educate the more advanced students. Others again have their lectures for ladies, and Ladies' Associations, such as at Ahmedabad, Bombay and Madras, started and maintained by the ladies themselves. Though the condition of female education is still very backward, and though the experiments that are now carried on are on different lines, the signs are clearly visible that throughout India, the national awakening to the necessity of developing the moral and intellectual capacities and aptitudes of our sisters has found universal recognition.

As regards another sign of this liberal movement which seeks to do equal justice to the rights of the female as of the male sex, it is satisfactory to note that though the number of widow marriages

*Address at the Eleventh Social Conference.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL REFORM*

G. SUBRAMANIA IYER

The decadence of a community does not necessarily mean its decadence in numbers. So far as numbers go, thanks to the custom of early and compulsory marriage, we have undergone no decay at all. The contract of a more vigorous and manly race has proved fatal to many an aboriginal race in the world. The ancient Peruvians, the Aztecs and the Caribs were exterminated by the more hardy races of Europe; and in Australia, in Africa and in America the aboriginal races are meeting with the same fate. But in the ceaseless vicissitudes of our history in the past, we have preserved our identity; and not only have we preserved our identity but have even preserved some of the more marked features of our distinct civilization. We have certainly multiplied in numbers. The innate vitality of the race has enabled it to resist the fate that overtook some ancient races and are overtaking the Pacific Islanders, the Maoris, and the Negroes in Africa and America. Still, the degeneration is perceptible along many a vein in the national character. We have preserved many of the softer and more passive elements of character—but have degenerated in the rougher, the more active, and the more manly elements. We are the same patient, peace-loving, orderly, industrious, simple and spiritual people that we were centuries ago. We preserve the same tenderness to animal life, the same sense of family obligations, the same regard for personal purity, the same metaphysical cast of mind. But patriotism, love of enterprise, co-operative faculty, adventure, energy, aspiration, devotion to duty and such like qualities, we have lost, if we ever possessed them. In fact, as the author of *Social Evolution* would put it, we have lost the qualities which contribute to 'Social efficiency'.

Speaking of the prosperity of nations and the causes of it Mr. Lecky says: 'Its foundation is laid in pure domestic life, in commercial integrity, in a high standard of moral worth and of

*Address at the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association.

A PLEA FOR WIDOW RE-MARRIAGE

RAO BAHADUR WAMANRAO MADHAV KOLHATKAR

In India, religion, not content with unlimited control over spiritual concerns, gradually wormed itself into the details of daily life, however trifling and however removed from the generally accepted idea of religion. In extending its dominion it insensibly increased in power. A departure, never so slight, from the rules of every day life as observed by the Hindus came to be looked upon as a sacrilege and as a consequence, to entail the penalty of excommunication. None can lay any claim to the name of a Hindu unless he endorses every practice sanctioned by the priestly class. Either a person must be a Hindu all over, or he cannot be a Hindu at all.

The Vedas troubled themselves only about particular religious performances like sacrifices. The Smritis extended their conquests and brought purely temporal things like apprenticeships, marriage, succession, adoption and the criminal law within the pale of religion ; and its example was imitated by the *Puranas* in the work of extending the dominion of religion to regions which were not its legitimate objects. How far this extending process would have carried its operations had it been allowed to go its own way, it is idle to speculate. But it is amusing to note the fetters with which religion thought fit to bind the apparently trifling routine of life. The obsequious ceremonies, that have to be performed before the dead are allowed to be burnt, are an instance in point. A son must, after the death of his father, part with his mustachios, and the shaving business has to keep time with incantations uttered by a priest. The adjustment of the pile of wood that is to consume the dead is accompanied by appropriate incantations. Even acts to which no ingenuity can attach the semblance of religious significance have their own religious appurtenances. On cremation grounds as near marriage altars, on deathbeds as on hymenal beds, in dinner parties as on fast days, there is only one idea present to the mind of a Hindu, one idea alone runs through acts performed by him ; and that all-engrossing idea is one of religion.

MARRIAGE REFORM AMONG THE HINDUS

RAO BAHADUR R. N. MUDHOLKAR

There is no doubt some basis for the trite observation that India is not a country but a continent and contains not a nation but a congeries of nations ; and when a stranger reads or hears the vast extent of the country and of something like the three hundred millions who inhabit it, of the numerous religions and faiths which they profess and follow, Mahomedanism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism—with the almost countless sects which are included in it—he is apt to be impressed with the absolute correctness of the remark. But to one who belongs to the country or has a knowledge of the actual condition of Indian society, the facts appear otherwise ; and undoubtedly so, as far as the Hindu community are concerned. From the Himalayas down to the Indian Ocean and from the Indus to the Brahmaputra the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra classes have institutions, manners, customs, observations, ceremonies which in essential features are the same. The members of the Jain sects, differ though they do in religious beliefs, dogmas and rituals from the orthodox sections of the Hindu community, are in the other matters which constitute their every day life, so similar that it is impossible to say from outward appearances whether a person is a Jain or an orthodox Hindu. We may go one step further and say that, so far as the bulk of the Mahomedan community is concerned, excluding religious observances, their domestic life is in several respects similar to that of the Hindus, which by the way cannot be a matter for surprise ; for, they consist of the descendants of converts to Mahomedanism and come from the same stock as the Hindus. Hindus and Mahomedans can well, in spite of difference of religion, be called one nation. But leaving Mahomedans out of consideration, the Hindus, who form the majority of the population, possess socially as well as politically all the characteristics of a nation ; and every question affecting their well-being is a question of national importance. Out of the total population of 287 millions returned by the Census of 1891, over

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

MAHATMA MUNSHI RAM AND PROFESSOR RAM DEVA

THE VEDIC CHURCH

The Vedas are the origin of Light and the source of Truth. The Vedic Church is undoubtedly a Universal Church. It preaches that the Veda was revealed in the beginning of creation for all races. It contains germs of all sciences—physical, mental and psychical. But it cannot be denied that the glorious period of the supreme achievements of the Vedic Church was the bright period of Indian history. When India was the centre of Vedic propaganda and missionaries were sent from it to different parts of the world, it was also the seat of a world-wide empire, and Indian kings exercised direct sovereignty over Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Tibet, etc., and Indian colonists colonized Egypt, Rome, Greece, Peru and Mexico. When, therefore, the Arya Samaj sings the glory of ancient India—the land of expositors of Revealed Learning, the sacred soil where Vedic institutions flourished and put forth their choicest fruits, the holy country where Vedic Philosophy and Vedic Metaphysics attain their highest development, the sanctified clime where lived examples who embodied in their conduct the loftiest conceptions of Vedic ethical teachings—the health forces of nationalism receive an impetus, and the young nationalist who had persistently dinned into his ear the mournful formula that Indian History recorded the lamentable tale of continuous and uninterrupted humiliation, degradation, foreign subjection, external exploitation, etc., feels that his dormant national pride is aroused and his aspirations stimulated. It is also true that the nationalism which seeks the shelter of the Vedic Church is a great agent of unification of Indian races and is least productive of racial animosity or sectarian bigotry. The Arya Samaj takes us back to a Buddhism, Christianity and Mahomedanism. Rama and Sita, Krishna and Arjuna, are national heroes and heroines of whose magnificent deeds and righteous activities all Indians—without distinction of caste, creed or race—might well

POLITICAL OUTLOOK OF ARYASAMAJISTS

MAHATMA HANSRAJ

[On 4th November 1927, it was probably for the first time that the Presidential address of Mahatma Hansraj at the Aryan Conference at Delhi, gave expression to the political views of the Arya Samajists. Here are some relevant extracts.

The Conference, among others, was attended by national figures like Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Shri Jammalal Bajaj, L. Lajpat Rai and Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.]

Swami Dayananda Saraswati believed that the Vedas are the fountain source of all the truth prevailing in any religion. He felt that there could be an end to all the communal strifes if he could convince people of the futility of most of their concepts and notions. Thus inspired, Swami Dayananda commended the right and condemned the wrong. He did not enunciate anything new to create a sensation. Every reformer when starts on his mission, judges everything on its merits and commends or condemns it accordingly.

Swami Dayananda wanted to bring reform among all the races and religions and thus to bring all of them together under one banner—the Vedic Dharma. . . .

Yet those who wish to crush the Rishi's voice understand that this way they stand in the way of the progress of this world. If the reactionaries to Buddha, Sankara, Christ, Mohammad and Luther had succeeded in their attempts, this world would have been much backward to-day.

Those who want to suppress the Rishi's voice must remember that the English people will not give up their policy of religious tolerance. It has become a part of their conduct.

The reformers see the evils around them with such an anguish that they can't but use strong words to denounce them. The victims of these evils are thus agitated. But, in fact, the reformers' dislike is only towards the evils they see and untruth they observe. They do not, in the least, mean to injure the religious sentiments of the followers of any religion.

THE WORK OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN INDIA

ANNIE BESANT

Let us glance at India as she was when the Theosophical Society came to her ; let us see whether the Theosophical Society has not had a large share in bringing about the change in India that we see on every side to-day ; for this, after all, is the point of immediate interest to raise and it is this on which explanation and defence are needed.

Now the Theosophical Society in India consists of some five thousand men and women scattered over the country in something less than three hundred Branches or Lodges. Almost the whole of that number is made up of English educated men and women. We have scarcely touched the masses of the people and in truth our work lies more with the educated ; for the religious can deal with the uneducated, if the advanced classes be enlightened and spiritual. Better to work among those who influence the masses than in the masses themselves as regards reformation and change. Changes should always begin above and work downwards ; then they influence powerfully and healthily ; but changes which begin in the masses tend to bring about revolutions rather than reforms. This is a small number you may say, in comparison with the population, though large regarded by itself. But it is an organised body and that adds enormously to its power. A very small body of disciplined people is far more effective and powerful than a vast mob of the undisciplined ; and each group of these five thousand people is surrounded by a great mass of sympathisers who work with them everywhere and strengthen their power enormously, whether you think it wielded for good or harm.

So India has within her borders an organised mass or her own sons and daughters gathered under the banner of the Theosophical society. The majority of them in India, naturally, are Hindus ; in Ceylon and Burma there is a fair number of the daughter faith of Buddhism ; there is a very considerable number among the Parsis ; very few in the great faith of Islam and that is one reason

TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL REFORM

VIVEKANANDA

To the reformers I will point out, I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want root and branch reform. Where we differ is exactly in the method. Their's is the method of destruction, mine is that of construction. I do not believe in reform ; I believe in growth. I do not dare to put myself in the position of God and dictate unto our society : 'This way you shall move and not that way.' I simply want to do my humble work, like the squirrel in the case of the building of Rama's bridge which was quite content to put on the bridge his little quota of sand dust. This is my position. This wonderful national machine has worked through ages ; this wonderful river of national life is flowing before us. Who knows and dares say whether it is good and how it shall move ? Thousands of circumstances are crowding around it, giving it a special impulse, making it dull at times and quicker at others. Who dares command its motion ? Ours is only to work, as the Gita says and stand by contented. Feed it with the fuel it wants, but the growth is its own ; none can dictate its growth to it. Evils there are plentiful in our society. So are there evils in every other society too. Here the earth is soaked sometimes with widow's tears ; there in the West the air is poisoned with the breath of the sobs of the unmarried. Here poverty is the great bane of life ; there the life-weariness of luxury is the great bane that is upon the race. Here men want to commit suicide because they have nothing to eat. Evil is everywhere, like rheumatism. Drive it from the foot, it goes to the head, drive it from there, it goes somewhere else. It is a question chasing it from place to place ; that is all. Aye, children, to remedy evil in true way. Our philosophy teaches that evil and good are eternally conjoined, the obverse and the reverse of the same medal. Have one, you have to get the other : make one billow in the ocean, it must be at the cost of the same hollow somewhere. Nay, all life is evil. No breath can be created without killing some one else, not a morsel of food can be eaten with-

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INDEX

- Ahmad, Mirza Gulam, 78, 81
Ahmad, Sheikh, 9, 10
Ahmadiya Movement, 78, 81
Ali, Ameer, 37
Ali, Amir Syed, 78, 79, 80
Ali, Maulana Muhammad, 1, 19
Aligarh College, 1, 39, 81, 84
American War of Independence, 22
Arab-Islamic Civilisation, 90
Arya Samaj, 1, 2, 26, 36, 38, 39, 51,
52, 53, 54, 58, 62, 63, 65, 66, 71, 72,
75, 79, 83, 85, 86, 87, 89, 99
Aryan Civilization, 4
Atmiya Sabha, 42
Azad, Maulana, 19
- Banerji, Surendra Nath, 17, 18
Benaras College, 84
Besant, Annie, 68, 69, 70, 83, 84, 91
Bhandarkar, R. G., 28
Blavatsky, Helena, 68, 69, 96
Brahmo Samaj, 1, 2, 15, 18, 26, 36, 39,
43, 46, 47, 51, 52, 58, 65, 76, 93, 94,
96
British East India Company, 23
British India, 95
Buddhism, 68
Burke, Marie, 96
- Caudwell, Christopher, 16
Chandra, Bhoodeb, 98
Chatterji, Bankim Chandra, 59, 98
Christian Missionaries, 12, 62, 67, 90
Christianity, 66, 77
Collet, Sophia D., 40
Comte, 72
Contemporary British Culture, the
movement in favour of, 3
- Dayananda Saraswati, 16, 39, 52, 53,
54, 62, 64, 65, 66, 79, 85, 94, 97
Dutta, R. Palme, 4, 5
- Dyakov, 5
- European modernism, 93
- Farquhar, J. N., 2
French Revolution, 22
- Gandhi, Mahatma, 1, 12, 13, 16, 18,
19
German Unity, 23
Ghosh, Aurobindo, 1, 4, 13, 19
Gita, 54
Gokhale, 25
Grey, Arthur, 86
- Hamilton, 72
Hardinge, Lord, 87
Hindu Muslim conflict, 6
Hindu Nationalism, 5, 12
Hindu Philosophy, 97
Hume, 84
Huxley, 69
- Indian culture, 8, 68, 92
Indian medievalism, 93
Indian Muslims, 1, 10, 77
Indian National Congress, 50, 84, 99
Indian national movement, 1, 22, 90
Indian Nationalism, 5, 8
Indian Reform Association, 46
Indian tradition, 54
Indo-European State, 41
Iqbal, Mohammad, 19
Islam, 38
Islamic modernism, 3, 38
Italian unity, 22
Iyer, Subramania, G., 27
- Jinnah, Mohammad Ali, 1, 13, 19
- Karve, D. K., 32
Khalifa, 9

- Khan, Sir Syed Ahmad, 1, 13, 37, 39, 77, 90
 Khan, The Aga, 37
 Khilafat, 90
- Luther, Martin, 14, 65
- Maclagan, E. P., 86
 Majumdar, Pratap Chunder, 19
 Marxist, alien approach to India, 2
 Mill, 69, 72
 Mitra, Naba Gopal, 98
 Moderates, The, 13
 Modern India, 1, 5, 21
 Moulvis, 67
 Mughal Rule in India, 8
 Mukherji, D. P., 22, 97
 Muller, Max, 19
 Muslim Nationalism, 12
- Naoroji, Dadabhai, 12
 Narain, Raj, 98
 Natarajan, 37
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 5, 12
 Nivedita, Sister, 88
- Olcott, H. S., 68, 69, 96
 Olatramare, Paul, 70
- Pakistan, 1, 6, 10
 Pal, Bipin Chandra, 50, 58, 93, 96
 Panikkar, K. M., 5
 Panipat, 10
 Patiala Sedition Case, 86
 Prasad, Rajendra, Dr., 6
 Prarthana Samaj, 2, 15, 51, 54, 96, 99
 Progressive, New Culture of the future, 3
- Rai, Lajpat, 25, 84, 85, 86, 91, 92, 93
 Ramakrishna Mission, 26, 51, 52, 74, 75, 88, 89, 99
- Ramanuja, 74
 Ranade, Mahadev Govinda, 28, 38, 59
 Rao, Baji, 12
 Rao, Raja, 89
 Rao, T. Madhava, 33
 Reactionary, New Culture of the future, 3
 Religion and Politics in Modern India, 12, 15, 20, 26, 67, 69, 76, 82, 97, 100
 Religion and Social Reforms, 2, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 29, 30, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 57, 73
 Roy, Raja Rammohan, 1, 16, 23, 29, 30, 35, 39, 40, 42, 43, 48, 49, 51, 94
- Sen, Keshab Chandra, 19, 49, 50, 94
 Shah, Waliulla, 9, 10
 Sircar, Akshay Chandra, 98
 Singh, Iqbal, 89
 Smith, W. C., 3, 5
 Social and religious reforms movement. See Religious and Social Reforms
 Social Reforms Conference, 15, 26, 29, 36, 51, 94
 Spencer, 69
 Shuddhi, 87
 Surajmall, 12
- Tagore, Debendranath, 74
 Tarachand, Dr., 8, 9, 12
 Theosophical Society, 1, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 83
 Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 1, 4, 13
 Tyabji, Badruddin, 37
- Vidyasagar, Ishwara Chandra, 32
 Vivekananda, Swami, 1, 2, 18, 34, 54, 56, 70, 73, 75, 76, 82, 88, 89, 96
- Western Civilization, 24, 90