



10

RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS IN MODERN INDIA

We are a very lucky people today. We are free from foreign domination and also free from many other rigidities which our ancestors had to face. The Indian society in the first half of the 19th century was caste ridden, decadent and rigid. It followed certain practices which are not in keeping with humanitarian feelings or values but were still being followed in the name of religion. A change was therefore needed in society. When the British came to India they introduced the English language as well as certain modern ideas. These ideas were those of liberty, social and economic equality, fraternity, democracy and justice which had a tremendous impact on Indian society. Fortunately for our country there were some enlightened Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati and many others who were willing to fight and bring in reforms in society so that it could face the challenges of the West.



OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

- identify some common characteristics of religious and social reform movement;
- explain the role played by Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj in bringing about religious reforms;
- recognise the Prarthana Samaj as an institution that worked for religious as well as social reform;
- explain the ideology of the Arya Samaj and its contributors to social and religious reforms;



- examine the contribution of the Ramakrishna Mission to India's awakening in the nineteenth century;
- appreciate the efforts of the Theosophical Society in promoting ancient Indian religions;
- discuss the contribution of the Aligarh Movement towards cultural and educational reforms amongst the Muslims; and
- examine the reforms carried out by the Sikhs and the Parsees to make their society enlightened.

10.1 COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

From the late 19th century a number of European and Indian scholars started the study of ancient India's history, philosophy, science, religions and literature. This growing knowledge of India's past glory provided to the Indian people a sense of pride in their civilization. It also helped the reformers in their work of religious and social reform for their struggle against all type of inhuman practices, superstitions etc.

Since they had become associated with religious beliefs, therefore most of the movements of social reform were of a religious character.

These social and religious reform movements arose among all communities of the Indian people. They attacked bigotry, superstition and the hold of the priestly class.

They worked for abolition of castes and untouchability, *purdah* system, *sati*, child marriage, social inequalities and illiteracy.

Some of these reformers were supported directly or indirectly by the British officials and some of the reformers also supported reformative steps and regulations framed by the British Government.

10.2 BRAHMO SAMAJ AND RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY

Men and women enjoy certain rights and freedom today. But do you know that they were given to us by the untiring efforts made by certain reformers. Among the great reformers of this period, Raja Rammohan Roy deserves special mention. He presented a fine combination of East and the West. A man of great literary talent and well versed in Indian culture, he also made special effort to study Christianity and Islam so that he could deal with them with understanding. He felt great revulsion for many practices prevailing in India that enjoyed religious approval.

**Notes**

His main pre-occupation was how to rid the Hindu religion of both image worship, sacrificial rites and other meaningless rituals. He condemned the priestly class for encouraging these practices. He opined that all the principal ancient texts of the Hindus preached monotheism or worship of one God. His greatest achievement in the field of religious reform was an setting up in 1828 of the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj was an important organization of religious reforms. It forbade idol-worship and discarded meaningless rites and rituals. The Samaj also forbade its members from attacking any religion. It believed in the basic unity of all the religions. Raja Rammohan Roy believed that man should adopt truth and goodness and should give up things based on falsehood and superstition.

Raja Rammohan Roy was not merely a religious reformer but a social reformer also. His greatest achievement was the abolition of Sati in 1829. Raja Rammohan Roy realized that the practice of Sati was due to the extremely low position of Hindu women. Therefore he started working as a stout champion of women's rights. He worked very hard for years to stop this practice of 'Sati'. In the early 1818 he set out to rouse public opinion on the question of Sati. On the one hand he showed by citing the authority of the oldest sacred books that the Hindu religion at its best was opposed to the practice and on the other, he appealed to reason and humanity and compassion of the people. He visited the burning ghats of Calcutta to try and persuade the relatives of widows to give up their plan of self-immolation. His campaign against Sati aroused the opposition of the orthodox Hindus who bitterly attacked him.

Raja Rammohan Roy was also deeply opposed to the caste system that prevailed in Indian society. A humanist and democrat to the core, he wrote and talked against the caste system. Another important area that concerned him was Hindu theology. Study of the Vedas and Upanishads gave him ground to show that monotheism was the original Hindu belief and hence he denounced polytheism and idolatry. In fact the philosopher did not insist on the creation of a new religion but merely endeavoured to 'purify' the Vedic religion from the crude and most ignorant superstitions. He proclaimed that there is only one God for all religions and for all humanity. He wrote in Bengali and English. He was an ardent promoter of English education. He was also well versed in the Persian language and some of his most liberal and rational ideas were expressed in his early writings in that language.

He advocated the abolition of polygamy (a practice of man having more than one wife) and child marriage. He wanted women to be educated and given the right to inherit property. He condemned the subjugation of women and opposed the prevailing ideas that women were inferior to men in intellect or in a moral sense. He advocated the rights of widows to remarry.

To bring his ideas into practice, Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Brahmo Sabha in 1828 which later came to be known as Brahmo Samaj. It was open to all persons regardless of their colour, convictions, caste, nationality, and religion. It emphasised human dignity, opposed idol worship and condemned social evils like *sati pratha*. It was not meant to be

**Notes**

a separate religious sect but only a place where all those who believed in one true God could meet and pray. No images were allowed and no sacrifices and offerings permitted.

Debendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905), the son of Dwarkanath Tagore, founder member of Brahmo Samaj, succeeded Raja Rammohan Roy as the leader of the Brahmo Samaj. He put new life in the Samaj and propagated Raja Rammohan Roy's ideas. Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884) took over the leadership of the Samaj from Tagore. The Brahmo Samaj stood for the principles of individual freedom, national unity, solidarity and collaboration and the democratisation of all social institutions and relations. It thus became the first organised vehicle for the expression of national awakening and inaugurated a new era for the people of India. However, the Brahmo Samaj was weakened by internal dissensions and its influence remained confined to urban educated groups. But it left its impact on the intellectual, social and political life of Bengal.

10.3 PRARTHANA SAMAJ AND RANADE

The Prarthana Samaj was established in Bombay by Dr. Atma Ram Pandurang (1825-1898) in 1876 with the objective of rational worship and social reform. The two great members of this Samaj were Shri R.C. Bhandarkar and Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade. They devoted themselves to the work of social reform such as inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage and improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes.

Mahavdev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) devoted his entire life to Prarthana Samaj. He was the founder of the Widow Remarriage Association (1861) and the Deccan Education Society. He established the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha as well. To Ranade, religious reform was inseparable from social reform. He also believed that if religious ideas were rigid there would be no success in social, economic and political spheres. MG Ranade was the leader of social reformation and cultural renaissance in Western India.

Ranade's great message to the persons who were involved in social service was "Strength of numbers we cannot command, but we can command earnestness of conviction, singleness of devotion, readiness for self-sacrifice, in all honest workers in the cause."

Although Prarthana Samaj was powerfully influenced by the ideas of Brahmo Samaj, it did not insist upon a rigid exclusion of idol worship and a definite break from the caste system. It did not regard the Vedas as the last word, nor did it believe in the doctrine of transmigration of the human soul and incarnation of God. Its central idea was one positive belief in the unity of God.

10.4 DEROZIO AND YOUNG BENGAL MOVEMENT

Henry Lui Vivian Derozio, joined the Hindu College of Calcutta as a teacher. He had



come from Scotland to sell watches in Calcutta, but later made the spread of modern education in Bengal as his life's mission.

Derozio promoted radical ideas through his teaching and by organizing an association for debate and discussions on literature, philosophy, history and science. He inspired his followers and students to question all authority. Derozio and his famous followers, known as the Derzians and Young Bengal, were fiery patriots. They cherished the ideals of the French Revolution (1789 A.D.) and the liberal thinking of Britain. Derozio died of cholera at the young age of 22.

The Young Bengal Movement continued even after Derozio's dismissal and his sudden death. Though deprived of leadership, the members of this group continued preaching radical views through teaching and journalism.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Another outstanding reformer in Bengal was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891 A.D.). A scholar of great depths, he dedicated himself to the cause of the emancipation of women. It was due to his sincere efforts that obstacles to the marriage of widows were removed through a law in 1856. He played a leading role in promoting education of girls and started and helped the setting up a number of schools for girls. Vidyasagar did not concern himself much with religious questions. However, he was against all those who opposed reforms in the name of religion.

10.5 SPREAD OF THE REFORM MOVEMENTS IN WESTERN AND SOUTHERN INDIA

After Bengal, the most important region where the movement for reforms spread was western India. Bal Shastri Jambekar was one of the first reformers in Bombay. He attacked Brahmanical orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism.

In 1849, the Parmahansa Mandali was founded in Poona, Satara and other towns of Maharashtra. Its followers had faith in one God and they opposed caste system. At its meetings, members took food cooked by low-caste people. They favoured education of women and supported widow remarriage. Mahadev Ranade believed that without social reforms it was not possible to achieve any progress in the political and economic fields. He was a great advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Two other great reformers in Western India were Gopal Hari Deshmukh Lokahitwari and Jotirao Govindrao Phule popularly known as Jotiba. They worked for the upliftment of women, took up the cause of women and downtrodden masses. Jyotiba with his wife started a girls school in Poona, in 1857. He also opened a school for the children of the depressed classes. Jotiba Phule was also a pioneer of the widow remarriage movement in



Maharashtra. He challenged the dominance of Brahmins and worked for organizing and activating the masses. He championed the cause of villagers and actively worked for rural development in Maharashtra. Jotiba was given the title of 'Mahatma' for his work for the cause of the oppressed. In 1873, he founded the Satya-Shodhak to give strength to his movement and make it popular.

In the southern parts of the country. Kandukuri Veeresalingam (1848-1919) pioneered the movement in support of widow remarriage and girls education in Andhra. Veda Samaj founded in Madras in 1864 advocated discarding of caste distinctions and promotion of widow remarriage and women's education. It condemned the superstitions and rituals of orthodox Hinduism and propagated belief in one supreme God. Chembeti Sridharalu Naidu was the most popular leader of the Veda Samaj. He translated books of the Veda Samaj in Tamil and Telugu.

An important movement particularly significant for the emancipation of the so-called backward and oppressed sections of Indian society was started by Shree Narayana Guru (1854-1928) in Kerala. In 1903 he founded the Shree narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) to carry on the work of social reform. Shree Narayana Guru considered differences based on caste and religion as meaningless and advocated what he called 'One Caste, one Religion and on God' for all.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1

1. State the circumstances that lead to the foundation of Brahmo Samaj?

2. What were the principles of Brahmo Samaj?

3. How did Prathana Samaj help reducing social disparities?

4. Who was M.G.Ranade?

10.6 SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI (1824-1883) AND ARYA SAMAJ

Attend a meeting of the Arya Samaj any day. You will find many women attending it. They are also performing yajana and reading the scriptures. This was the basic contribution of Mool Shanker an important representative of the religions reform movement in India from

**Notes**

Gujarat. He later came to be known as Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883). He founded the Arya Samaj in 1875.

The most influential movement of religious and social reform in northern India was started by Dayanand Saraswati. He held that the Vedas contained all the knowledge imparted to man by God and essentials of modern science could also be traced in them. He was opposed to idolatry, ritual and priesthood, particularly to the prevalent caste practices and popular Hinduism as preached by the Brahmins. He favoured the study of western science. With all this doctrine, he went about all over the country and in 1875 founded the Arya Samaj in Bombay.

Satyarth Prakash was his most important book. The use of Hindi in his writings and preachings made his ideas accessible to the common people of northern India. Arya Samajis opposed child marriages and encouraged remarriage of widows. It made rapid progress in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

A Network of schools and colleges for boys and girls was established throughout northern India to promote the spread of education. Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School of Lahore, which soon developed into a premier college of Punjab, set the pattern for such institutions. Instruction was imparted through Hindi and English on modern lines. Lala Hansraj played a leading role in this field. In 1902, Swami Shradhananda started the Gurukul near Hardwar to propagate the more traditional ideas of education. This was set up on the pattern of ancient Ashrams.

Arya Samaj tried to inculcate the spirit of self-respect and self-reliance among the people of India. This promoted nationalism. At the same time one of its main objectives was to prevent the conversion of Hindus to other religions. It also prescribed a purificatory ceremony called *suddhi* for those Hindus who had been converted to other religions like Islam and Christianity.

10.7 THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya (1836-86) was a poor Brahmin priest who later came to be known as Ramakrishna Paramahansa. His education did not proceed beyond the elementary stage and he had no formal education in philosophy and Shastras. He dedicated his life to God. He believed that there were many roads to God and the service of man was the service of God, because man was the embodiment of God. Hence sectarianism had no place in his teachings. He realised the divinity in humanity and looked upon the service of mankind as a means to salvation.

Narendra Nath Datta (1863-1902) later known as Swami Vivekananda was the most devoted pupil of Ramakrishna Paramahansa who carried the message of his Guru Ramakrishna all over the world, specially in America and Europe.



Notes

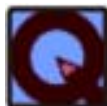
Vivekananda was proud of India's spiritual heritage, but he believed that no individual or nation can live by holding himself or itself apart from the community of others. He condemned the caste system, rigid rituals, century old superstitions and advocated liberty, free thinking and equality.

Vivekananda was indeed, a patriot from the core of his heart. He had tremendous faith in the evolution of Indian culture and an intense zeal to revive all that was good and great in her culture so as to serve her in all possible ways for her onward march.

Swami Vivekananda laid stress on Ramakrishna's teaching on the essential oneness of all religions. He promoted the Vedanta philosophy which he considered the most rational system.

The principal feature of Vivekananda's social philosophy was his insistence on the upliftment of the masses. For him, service to the poor and downtrodden was the highest religion. To organise such service, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897. This Mission to date has played an important role in providing social service in times of national distress like famine, floods, and epidemic. Many schools, hospitals, orphanages are run by it.

In 1893 he participated in the All World Religious Conference (Parliament of Religions) at Chicago in the United States of America. He argued that Vedanta was the religion of all and not of the Hindus alone. His address there made a deep impression on the people of other countries and thus helped to raise the prestige of Indian culture in the eyes of the world. Though his mission was mainly of religious nature, he was keenly interested in the improvement of all aspects of national life. He expressed his concern for the miserable and poor conditions of the people and said that neglect of the masses is a sin. He frankly stated, "It is we who are responsible for all our misery and all our degradation." He urged his countrymen to work for their own salvation. For this purpose bands of workers devoted to this cause were trained through the Ramakrishna Mission. Thus Vivekananda emphasized social good or social services.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.2

1. Who founded Arya Samaj?

2. Where was first Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College established?

3. How according to Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya can you achieve salvation?



4. What was the original name of Swami Vivekanand?

5. What according to Swami Viveknand was the highest religion?

10.8 THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND ANNIE BESANT

Theosophical society has played an important role in the history of the religion, society and culture of modern India. It was founded in the USA in 1875 by a Russian spiritualist Madame H.P. Blavatsky and an American Col. H.S. Olcott. Its objective was to promote studies in ancient religions, philosophies and science, develop the divine powers latent in man and form a universal brotherhood of man.

The Society was introduced to India in 1879 and its headquarters were set up at Adyar near Madras in 1886. Its influence spread under Annie Beasant in 1893 who played an important role in India's struggle for freedom. She and her associates advocated the revival and strengthening of the ancient religions of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. They recognized the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. They also preached the universal brotherhood of man. They helped to impart to the educated Indians a sense of pride in their own country. Annie Beasant's movement was a movement led and supported by westerners who glorified Indian religious and philosophical traditions. This helped Indians to recover their self-confidence.

In fact the activities of Annie Besant in the field of education were more significant. She founded the Central Hindu College at Banaras which she later handed over to Madan Mohan Malaviya. He developed that college into the Banaras Hindu University. Although the Theosophical Movement did not enjoy mass popularity, its work under the leadership of Annie Besant for awakening of the Indians was remarkable. She contributed a great deal to the development of national spirit in Indians. The headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar became a centre of knowledge with a library of rare Sanskrit books.

The society fought against untouchability and advocated upliftment of women. Annie Besant dedicated her whole life to the cause of Indian society. She described her mission in these words: "The Indian work is first of all the revival, the strengthening and uplifting of the ancient religions. This has brought with it a new self-respect, and pride in the past; belief in the future, and as an inevitable result, a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation".

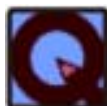
One of Mrs. Besant's many achievements in India was the establishment of the Central Hindu School. Annie Besant made India her permanent home and took a prominent part in Indian politics. "The needs of India are, among others, the development of a national spirit



Notes

and an education founded on Indian ideas and enriched, not dominated by the thoughts and culture of the West". She always supported Home Rule for Indians and established a Home Rule League in 1916 to spread the message of self rule.

Branches of the Theosophical Society were opened all over India and its Journal *Theosophist* had a wide circulation. The Society gave a helping hand in social and religious reform, especially in south India. Most of the work done by it was influenced by Annie Besant.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.3

1. Where was The Theosophical Society founded?

2. Who founded the Theosophical Society?

3. Where was the head quarters of the Theosophical Society in India?

4. Who established Home Rule League in 1916?

10.9 ALIGARH MOVEMENT AND SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

You have just read about reform within the Hindu religion, its practices and social institutions. A similar reform movement was also taking place within Islam. The Muslim upper classes had tended to avoid contact with Western education and culture and it was only after the revolt of 1857 that modern ideas of religious reform began to appear. The beginning was made by the Muhammedan Literary Society founded in Calcutta in 1863 founded by Nawab Abdul Latif 1828-1893. It promoted discussion of religious, social and political questions in the light of modern ideas and encouraged upper and middle class Muslims to adopt Western education. It also played an important role for Muslim Unity. The Muslim masses were also influenced by movements carried on by the Chishti sufis who preached not only submission to God but also promoted the veneration of saints. Another movement is associated with Shah Waliullah in Delhi, who opposed the unorthodox religious practices and revived the Shia sect and strict monotheism. The philosophical and learned tradition of the Firangi Mahal in Lucknow was incorporated into the new educational syllabus and propagated throughout India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sharitulla of

**Notes**

Bengal was the leader of the Faraizi movement Bengal which took up the cause of the peasants and even spoke against the caste system among the Muslims.

The most notable of the Muslim reformers was Sayyid Ahmed of Rai Bareilly, in Uttar Pradesh. He attracted the Muslim artisans of the declining weaving towns of Allahabad and Patna finding a ready audience and giving the common people dignity and an identity through a common faith at a time of social dislocation. He realised that unless the Muslims adapted themselves to the changed circumstances of British rule, they would be deprived of all new opportunities for status and prosperity. He was highly impressed by modern scientific thought and worked all his life to reconcile it with Islam. He interpreted the Quran in the light of rationalism and science. He urged the people to develop a critical approach and freedom of thought. He also warned against fanaticism, narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness. He asked the people to be broadminded and tolerant. In 1883 he said: “Now both of us (Hindus and Muslims) live on the air of India, drink the holy waters of the Ganga and Jamuna. We both feed upon the products of the Indian soil... we are a nation and the progress and welfare of the country, and both of us, depend on our unity, mutual sympathy, and love, while our mutual disagreement, obstinacy and opposition and ill-feeling are sure to destroy us”.

Syed Ahmed Khan rightly felt that isolation would harm the Muslim community and to prevent that he did his best to create a link with the progressive cultural forces of the outside world. He worked hard to remove the hostility of the British rulers towards the Muslims whom they considered as their real enemies.

He felt that the religious and social life of the Muslims could be improved only with the help of modern Western scientific knowledge and culture. Therefore, promotion of modern education was the first task. As an official, he founded schools at many places. He got many Western books translated into Urdu. He started the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875 at Aligarh. It was meant to be a centre for spreading Western sciences and culture. Later, this college grew into the Aligarh Muslim University.

The liberal, social and cultural movement started by Sayyid Ahmad Khan among the Muslims is known as the Aligarh Movement as it originated in Aligarh. The Anglo-Oriental College was the centre of this movement. It aimed at promoting modern education among Muslims without weakening the ties with Islam. It became the central educational institution for Indian Muslims.

The Aligarh Movement was largely responsible for the Muslim revival that followed. It provided a focal point for the scattered Muslim population in different parts of the country. It gave them a common fund of ideas and a common language - Urdu. A Muslim press was developed for the compilation of works in Urdu.

Sayyid Ahmad's efforts extended to the social sphere as well. He worked for social reforms. He wanted women to be educated and advocated the removal of the purdah. He was also against polygamy.



There were several other socio-religious movements which in one way or the other helped the national awakening of the Muslims. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had founded the Ahmediya Movement in 1899. Under this movement, a number of schools and colleges were opened all over the country, imparting modern education. In the field of religion the followers of this movement emphasized the universal and humanitarian character of Islam. They favoured the unity among Hindus and Muslims.

One of the greatest poets of modern India, Muhammad Iqbal, (1876-1938) also profoundly influenced through his poetry, the philosophical and religious outlook of the younger generation of Muslims as well as of Hindus. He urged the adoption of a dynamic outlook that would help change the world. He was basically a humanist.

10.10 REFORM MOVEMENTS AMONG PARSIS

Religious reform began among the Parsis in Mumbai in the middle of the 19th century. In 1851, the Rehnumai Maz'dayasan Sabha or Religious Reform Association was founded by Nauroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, S.S. Bengalee and others. They started a journal Rast Goftar, for the purpose of social-religious reforms among the Parsis. They also played an important role in the spread of education, specially among girls. They campaigned against the entrenched orthodoxy in the religious field and initiated the modernization of Parsi social customs regarding the education of girls marriage and the social position of women in general. In course of time, the Parsis became socially the most westernized section of Indian society.

10.11 RELIGIOUS REFORM AMONG SIKHS

Religious reform among the Sikhs was started at the end of the 19th Century when the Khalsa College started at Amritsar. Through the efforts of the Singh Sabhas (1870) and with British support, the Khalsa College was founded at Amritsar in 1892. This college and schools set up as a result of similar efforts, promoted Gurumukhi, Sikh learning and Punjabi literature as a whole.

After 1920 the Sikh momentum gained momentum when the Akali Movement rose in Punjab. The chief object of the Akalis was to improve the management of the Gurudwaras or Sikh Shrines that were under the control of priests or Mahants who treated them as their private property. In 1925, a law was passed which gave the right of managing Gurudwaras to the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee.

10.12 IMPACT OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

The British wanted to appease the orthodox upper section of society. As a result only two important laws were passed. Some legal measures were introduced to raise the status of

women. For example Sati was declared illegal (1829). Infanticide was declared illegal. Widow remarriage was permitted by a law passed in 1856. Marriageable age of girls was raised to ten by a law passed in 1860.

A law passed in 1872, sanctioned inter-caste and inter-communal marriages. The other law passed in 1891, aimed at discouraging child marriage. For preventing child marriage, the Sharda Act was passed in 1929. According to it a girl below 14 and a boy below 18 could not be married. In the 20th century and especially after 1919 the Indian national movement became the main propagator of social reform. Increasingly, the reformers took recourse to propaganda in the Indian language to reach the masses. They also used novels, dramas, short stories, poetry, the Press and in the thirties (1930's), the cinema too spread their views.

Numerous individuals, reform societies, and religious organizations worked hard to spread education among women, to prevent marriage of young children, to bring women out of the purdah, to enforce monogamy, and to enable middle class women to take up professions or public employment. Due to all these efforts Indian women played an active and important role in the struggle for independence of the country. As a result many superstitions disappeared and many others were on their way out. Now, it was no longer a sin to travel to foreign countries.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.4**

1. Who started Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College?

2. Where is the Aligarh Muslim University located?

3. What were the views of Sayyid Ahmed Khan for Muslim women?

4. Where was the Muhammedan Literary Society established?

5. Give the names of any three famous socio-religious reformers of the Parsis.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- The impact of British rule in India led to a number of social and religious reforms.

**Notes**

MODULE - IV

Religion and Philosophy



Notes

Religious Refrorms Movements in Modern India

- Raja Rammohan Roy can be regarded as the central figure of India's awakening for championing the spread of modern education, science and technology and for his relentless fight against many social evils.
- R.G Bhandarkar and M.G. Ranade carried out their work of religious reforms in Maharashtra through the Prarthana Samaj by propagating inter-caste marriages, freedom from priestly domination and improvement of the lot of women.
- Swami Dayananda Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj and pleaded for the right of individuals to interpret Vedas and free themselves from the tyranny of priests. Besides all this, the organisation fought against untouchability and caste rigidity as well as worked for promoting modern education.
- Swami Vivekananda, a great humanist, through his Ramakrishna Mission condemned religious narrow mindedness, advocated free thinking and emphasised on service for the poor.
- The Theosophical Society, under the guidance of Annie Besant, promoted studies of ancient Indian religions, philosophies and doctrines.
- Religious reforms among the Muslims were carried out by Sayyid Ahmad Khan who encouraged Muslims to adopt modern education; denounced polygamy, purdah system and spoke against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What was Raja Ram Mohan Roy's role in the social reforms in India?
2. How would you say that Prathana Samaj was doing religious as well as social reforms?
3. How will you justify the Arya Samaj's faith in Vedas?
4. Explain how Rama Krishna Mission helped in awakening India in the nineteenth century?
5. Discuss the efforts of Sayyid Ahmed Khan in removing the evils of Muslim community?
6. The contributions of The Theosophical Society in the development of Indian society cannot be forgotten. Elaborate.
7. Write a short note on the reforms undertaken by the Sikh reformers.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

10.1

1. Practices prevalent in the society such as Sati Pratha, Caste system.
2. Oppose idol worship. No to sacrifices, no to offerings, Sati Pratha condemnation, Human dignity.



3. By doing inter-caste marriage, inter-caste dining, widow remarriage, improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes.
4. A strong follower of Prathana Samaj ideology.

10.2

1. Arya Samaj was founded by Dayanand Saraswati.
2. At Lahore in 1886.
3. The service of mankind is a means to salvation
4. Narendra Nath Datta.
5. Service to the poor and downtrodden.

10.3

1. U.S.A.
2. H.P. Balavatsky – a Russian and Col H.S. Olocott – an American.
3. Adyar near Chennai
4. Mrs. Annie Besant.

10.4

1. Sayyid Ahmed Khan
2. Aligarh
3. Removal of Purdha system and Education for women.
4. At Calcutta in 1863.
5. Dadabhai Naoroji, S.S. Bengalee, Nauroji Furdongi.