



Brahmo Samaj

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Samaj**

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Meaning of Brahmo Samaj

- *Brahmo* literally means "one who worships [Brahman](#)", and *Samaj* means "community of men".
- The Brahmo Samaj literally denotes community ([Sanskrit](#): '*samaj*') of men who worship [Brahman](#) the highest reality.
- In reality Brahmo Samaj does not discriminate between caste, creed or religion and
- It is an assembly of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction, meeting publicly for the sober, orderly, religious and devout adoration of "*the (nameless) unsearchable Eternal, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe.*"

Formation of Brahmo Samaj

- It was one of the most influential religious movements in India.
- It is made a significant contribution to the making of modern [India](#).
- It was started at Calcutta on 20 August 1828 by [Raja Ram Mohan Roy](#) and [Debendranath Tagore](#) as reformation of the prevailing Brahmanism of the time (specifically [Kulin](#) practices).
- It began the Bengal Renaissance of the 19th century pioneering all religious, social and educational advance of the Hindu community in the 19th century.
- Its Trust Deed was made in 1830, formalizing its inception and
- it was duly and publicly inaugurated in January 1830 by the consecration of the first house of prayer, now known as the [Adi Brahmo Samaj](#).

Founder of Brahmo Samaj

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy is regarded as Father of Modern India who founded the first religious reform organisation i.e. Brahmo Samaj in 1828. The two most prominent leaders of the Brahmo Samaj were Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen.
- It forbade idol-worship and discarded meaningless rites and rituals. The Samaj also forbade its members from attacking any religion.

Objective of Brahmo Samaj

- Brahmo Samaj, (Sanskrit: “Society of Brahma”) Brahmo also spelled Brahma, theistic movement within Hinduism, founded in Calcutta [now Kolkata] in 1828 by Ram Mohan Roy.
- The Brahmo Samaj does not accept the authority of the **Vedas**, has no faith in **avatars** (incarnations), and does not insist on belief in **karma** (causal effects of past deeds) or **samsara** (the process of death and rebirth).
- It discards Hindu rituals and adopts some Christian practices in its worship.
- Influenced by Islam and Christianity, it denounces **polytheism**, image worship, and the **caste** system.

Streams of Brahmo Samaj

- Anusthanic versus Ananusthanic Brahmos
- To understand the differences between the two streams of Brahmo Samaj were based on [caste](#).
- The Anusthanic Brahmos are exclusively either [Brahmins](#) or casteless, and exclusively adhere to Brahmoism and have no other faith.
- The Ananusthanic Brahmo Samajists, however, are from the remaining main caste divisions of Hinduism like [Kayastha](#), [Baidya](#) etc.
- This is within the [Karmic](#) / [Rebirth](#) wheel to eternally progress (i.e. *Sanatana Dharm*) to God by moving up caste hierarchies,
- Unlike anusthanic Brahmos for whom the next step after death is reintegration and renewal with 'God'.

Introduction of Raja Ram Mohan Roy

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born in a well-to-do family in Bengal, probably in 1772.
- He received his traditional Sanskrit learning at Banaras and Arabic and Persian learning at Patna.
- Later, he learnt *English, Greek and Hebrew*. He also knew *French and Latin*.
- He **made a deep study not only of Hinduism but also of Islam, Christianity and Judaism**.
- He wrote a number of books in *Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian and English*.
- He started two newspapers, one in Bengali and another in Persian.
- He was given the **title of Raja** and sent to England by the Mughal Emperor as his envoy.
- He reached England in 1831 and died there in 1833.

Contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy

- He was given the title of *Raja* and sent to England by the Mughal Emperor as his envoy.
- He supported the introduction of English education in India, which was necessary to promote enlightenment and knowledge of science.
- He was a great believer in the freedom of the press and campaigned for the removal of restrictions on the press.
- The greatest achievement in the field of social reform was the abolition of Sati in 1829.

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- He had seen how the wife of his elder brother was forced to commit Sati.
- His campaign against Sati aroused the opposition of the orthodox Hindus who bitterly attacked him.
- Ram Mohan Roy realized that the practice of sati was due to the extremely low position of Hindu women.
- He advocated the *abolition of polygamy*, and wanted women to be educated and given the *right to inherit property*.

Thoughts

- He advocated belief in a **universal religion based on the principle of one supreme God**. He condemned **idol-worship and the rites and rituals**.
- Ram Mohan Roy was convinced that to purify Hindu religion of the evils that had crept into it, it was necessary to bring to the knowledge of the people the original texts of their religion. For this purpose, he took up the hard and patient job of publishing the **Bengali translations of the Vedas and Upanishads**.

Doctrine of Brahma Samaj

The following doctrines, as noted in Renaissance of Hinduism, are common to all varieties and offshoots of the *Brahmo Samaj*:

- Brahma Samajists have no faith in any scripture as an authority.
- Brahma Samajists have no faith in [Avatars](#)
- Brahma Samajists denounce polytheism and idol-worship.
- Brahma Samajists are against caste restrictions.
- Brahma Samajists make faith in the doctrines of [Karma](#) and Rebirth optional.

Social and religious reform

- In all fields of social reform, including abolition of the [caste system](#) and of the [dowry system](#), [emancipation of women](#), and improving the educational system, the *Brahmo Samaj* reflected the ideologies of the Bengal Renaissance.
- Brahmoism, as a means of discussing the dowry system, was a central theme of [Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay](#)'s noted 1914 [Bengali language novella](#), *[Parineeta](#)*.

Decline of Brahmo Samaj

- With Rammohun's departure for England in 1830, the affairs of Brahmo Sabha were effectively managed by Trustees [Dwarkanath Tagore](#) and Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, with Dwarkanath instructing his [diwan](#) to manage affairs.
- By the time of Rammohun's death in 1833 near Bristol (UK), attendance at the *Sabha* dwindled and the Telugu Brahmins revived idolatry.
- The *zameendars*, being preoccupied in business, had little time for affairs of *Sabha*, and flame of *Sabha* was almost extinguished.

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- In 1866, [Keshub Chandra Sen](#) organised the more radical "Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj" with overtones of Christianity.
- He campaigned for the education of women and against child marriages.
- But he nonetheless arranged a marriage for his own underage daughter Suniti with the prince of Coochbehar.

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- The *Brahmo Samaj of India* split after this act of underage marriage generated a controversy and
- His pro-British utterances and
- leaning towards Christian rites generated more controversies.
- A third group, "Sadharan (ordinary) Brahmo Samaj", was formed in 1878.
- It gradually reverted to the teaching of the Upanishads but continued the work of social reform.
- The movement, always an elite group without significant popular following, lost force in the 20th century.

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Thank You