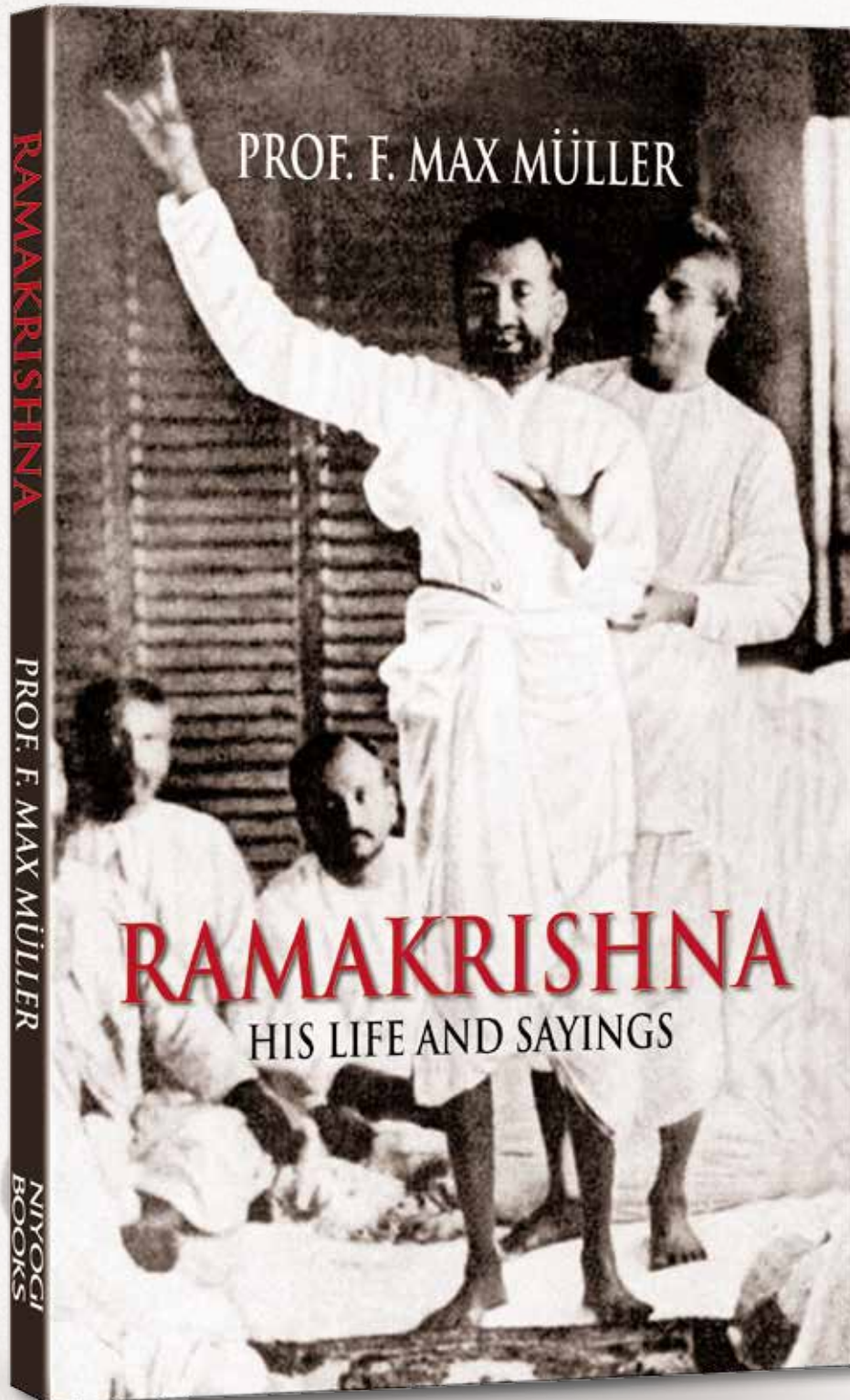


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# RAMAKRISHNA

## HIS LIFE AND SAYINGS

by

**Ramakrishna Paramahansa**

BIOGRAPHY

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**F**riedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), a German-born philologist and Orientalist, was one of the founders of the western academic field of Indian studies and the discipline of comparative religion. Well versed in Sanskrit, the classical language of India, and many other languages, Max Müller was instrumental in translating into English some of the most revered religious and philosophical texts of Asia. Especially noteworthy is his edition of the great collection of Sanskrit hymns of the Rigveda. Intrigued by the concept of religion, Müller initiated an important discipline that he called the ‘science of religion’. He believed that a genuine study of religion required the knowledge of its origins, and recognised that religion had developed differently in different linguistic spheres. So, instead of using the prevailing ethnographic approach, he pursued the science of religion by studying words and texts.

Müller was fascinated by the spiritual teachings of the Indian mystic, Ramakrishna, because, he was of the opinion that ‘the real presence of the Divine... in the human soul was nowhere felt so strongly and so universally as in India’, and that ‘the fervent love of God... has nowhere found a stronger and more eloquent expression than in the utterances of Ramakrishna’.

**Ramakrishna Paramahansa** (1833–86) was perhaps the most popularly known saint of 19th century India and an important figure in Bengali Renaissance. His philosophy impacted intellectuals even beyond the boundaries of the country. Philologist and Orientalist Friedrich Max Müller, inspired by this philosophy—largely based on the Vedanta—applied it in his study of ‘the science of religion’. He, therefore, delved deeper into the essence of the language of Ramakrishna’s sayings.

Hindu by birth, Ramakrishna was given the religio-theological title of honour ‘Paramahansa’, as he was identified as ‘the enlightened one’ who had experienced God. He observed different religious rituals alike, and believed that ‘A truly religious man should think that other religions also are paths leading to the truth...’ He perceived God as a parent who knew how ‘the same fish may be made to taste differently’ for the children according to their tastes and temperaments. His earthy aphorisms, comprising parables and metaphors and narrated in rustic Bengali, translated into Hindu philosophical concepts and reached out easily to the masses. The present book is one of the early documentations by a Western scholar of Ramakrishna’s life and sayings as were collected by his followers after his death.

*One of the earliest biography of Ramakrishna written by a western Scholar.*

*The only biography which features the Kathamrita in English.*

*Collection of information mostly came from Ramakrishna’s devoted disciples, newspapers, journals, and books in which the principle events of his life is chronicled.*