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Basic Tenets of Brahma Dharma

- 1) The Faith that the Supreme Being (God Almighty) alone was in the beginning, nothing else existed. He created all this universe. He is eternal, infinite, all merciful, independent, formless, one without a second, all pervading, ruling over all, all-containing, all knowing, all powerful, the permanent, the perfect, the one beyond any comparison. In his worship alone lies our welfare in this world and in the world to come. To love him and to do what he loves is his worship. (From “Brahmodharma Bija” framed by Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore in 1850)
- 2) A Brahma will never worship any created objects as representing that Supreme Being (idolatry in any form is discarded) and never believes in caste divisions (caste system is interdicted).
- 3) A Brahma, unless incapacitated by illness or other calamity, should daily compose his soul in love and trust, in the Supreme Being and he should strive for the performance of good deeds and for keeping away from evil. If by chance, he commits any evil he should truly repent for it, and desist from the path of evil.
- 4) He should contribute something every year for the furtherance of the work of the Brahma Samaj (for 2, 3 & 4 refer to Brahma covenant introduced by Maharshi in 1850 and to “Religion of Brahma Samaj”, by Hem Chandra Sarkar).
- 5) Neither the Vedas, nor any other scripture of any religion are considered infallible by Brahma Dharma. It welcomes truth from all sources.
- 6) Brahma Dharma does not recognise any priestly class or any guru or prophet as mediator between God and man or as God’s representative.
- 7) Brahma Dharma has its own prayer hall and its own simple rituals for social and family occasions.

Dear Friends,

This is the third year when after a long gap in time we have been able to bring out a Maghotsava Issue of the Indian Messenger.

This year again after a long period of time the publication work in-house right from composing to printing and binding. This development is surely a happy news to all our friends and sympathizers. But the in-house effort is also one of the reasons for the delay in this years production added to the perennial difficulty of acquiring articles for the journal and procuring advertisement matter which help us defray the expenses of publications of this special issue and its dispatch to our members and the other Samajes situated in the different parts of the country.

However, by the grace of God and the constant untiring efforts of our in-house production team formed with members of the sub-committees of the Indian Messenger and the Publication division successfully completed the publication of the journal in spite of the added responsibility of all the printing requirements of the Samaj starting with Voting papers, Maghotsava programmes, donation receipt books, Annual reports and other related materials.

While we rejoice that the in-house printing facility makes it possible to meet the regular printing requirements of the Samaj, a sadness touches our heart when we recall that person whose enthusiasm and encouragement made this possible Sri Prasun Kumar Ray our late President missed the opportunity to see the fulfillment of his wish.

The Samaj has freshly published the website www.thesadharanbrahmosamaj.org which presents information on the Samaj and its regular activities to guide interested persons to our various functions and social service programmes and protect them from misleading information.

We pray to the Almighty for his guidance and benevolence so that we are able to serve our fellowmen better and hold up the ideas of the Brahmo Samaj.

Fraternally yours,

Premomoy Das

Secretary – Sadharan Brahmo Samaj

The Problem of World Peace

The problem of world peace has two main features, the problem of fear and the problem of freedom. The main cause of the world's unrest is fear; - how should we go about banishing fear and what will we substitute for it?

There are two weapons that banish fear; Brotherhood and Freedom. We banish fear by believing in and practicing brotherhood, by having confidence in the good or higher part that we must appeal. This higher part of man will ever respond to our thoughts and actions of love and brotherhood if our thoughts and our appeal are sincere and genuine.

The idea of sharing of our benefits and our freedom is only bringing to be dimly sensed by the peoples of the world; and so we have the first attempt to share our knowledge and our resources on an international scale in the United Nations and its agencies that are helping the backward countries.

We are beginning to see that our progress, our security and our peace are bound up with world-scrutiny, world-peace and world-progress. We are beginning to see the idea of One world, and this is beginning to be accepted by most of the peoples of the world. This idea of one world, of world-unity, is the idea of the future. The time is ripe for world-unity, and when the time is ripe for a world-idea, it is as impossible to stop it as it is to stop the tide. We see its beginning and we see it gathering momentum from year to year, even from week to week. The future belongs to the idea of Unity and Brotherhood, the essence of which is sympathy, understanding and thoughts of kindness for others. When we produce in our hearts and minds purity, peace and love, then we are practicing brotherhood, and we discover a new and friendly world, a world without fear, a world of peace, of sharing, and of love.

- C. H. Hunter, The Theosophist

ALAYA-VIJNANA AND BUDDHA-DHATU

Dr. Amartya Kumar Bhattacharya

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This article deals with the definition of a man's personality. What a man thinks, he does. A man's mind (Chitta, Manas, Hsin or Xin – in Chinese, Kokoro – in Japanese) thus determines his personality. Lord Buddha said “Monks, I say that volition is action. Having thought, one acts through body, speech and mind.” (Chetana 'ham bhikkhave kammam vadami. Chetayitva kammam karoti kayena vachaya manasa. – in Pali). The Yogachara (the practice of Yoga or Vijnanavada; Tibetan: sems-tsam; Chinese: Weishi or Yuqiexing bai; Japanese: Yugagyō or Yuishiki) school of Mahayana (Ta-sheng – in Chinese, Daijō – in Japanese) Buddhism deals with man's personality in great detail. Yogachara, which had its genesis in the Samdhinirmochana Sutra (2nd century CE), was largely formulated by Acharya Asanga and Acharya Vasubandhu. The Samdhinirmochana Sutra is the seminal Sutra of the Yogachara school. The Lankavatara Sutra (4th century CE) is another very important Sutra (Sutta – in Pali, Ching – in Chinese, Kyo – in Japanese, Gyong – in Korean) of this school. The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra is another important Sutra. Acharya Asanga wrote the Abhidharmasamuchchaya, Madhyanta Vibhaga and the Mahayana Sutralankara and Acharya Vasubandhu wrote the Abhidharmakosha, Tri-Swabhava Nirdesha, Madhyanta Vibhaga Bhashya, Vimshatika-karika and the Trimshatika-karika. Lord Buddha expounded Anatmata or Nairatmya (Anatta – in Pali, Muga – in Japanese). The Sanskrit word “Atman”, the Pali word “Atta” and the Chinese word “Shen” mean Soul. In its most fundamental sense, Nairatmya implies selflessness which has its external manifestation in selfless action in order to benefit others. The wisdom gained by experience (Bhavana-maya Prajna, Bhavana-maya Panna – in Pali) is that Atman is not found even in the deepest meditative

experience, that is, during Samadhi. Further, subscription to a belief in Atman results in egoism (Ahamkara) and attachment towards mundane things (Mamakara). Lord Buddha's first sermon, at Rishipatana (Isipatana – in Pali) near Varanasi, is called the Dharmachakrapravartana Sutra (Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta – in Pali) and His second sermon (Sutra, Sutta – in Pali, Ching – in Chinese, Kyo – in Japanese, Gyong – in Korean), delivered five days later, also at Rishipatana (modern Sarnath), is called the Anatmalakshana Sutra (Anattalakkhana Sutta – in Pali). Lord Buddha said, in the beginning of the Anatmalakshana Sutra, “Rupam Anatma, Vedana Anatma, Sanjna Anatma, Samskara Anatma, Vijnana Anatma” (Rupam Anatta, Vedana Anatta, Sanna Anatta, Sankhara Anatta, Vinnana Anatta – in Pali, Material Form is not the Soul, Sensation is not the Soul, Perception is not the Soul, Pre-disposition is not the Soul, Consciousness is not the Soul). In the course of yet another sermon, at Shravasti, Lord Buddha said “There is an unborn, unchanging, uncreated, and unconditioned. If there were not, this that which is unborn, unchanging, uncreated, and unconditioned, there could not be any escape from what is born, changing, created, and conditioned. But since there is an unborn, unchanging, uncreated, and unconditioned, there is an escape from what is born, changing, created and conditioned. ”. With these words, Lord Buddha pointed His finger towards the Paramartha-Satya (ultimate truth), which is Nirvana (Liberation, Nibbana – in Pali, Gedatsu – in Japanese). At another point, Lord Buddha mentioned that one kind of desire is desire for existence (Bhava-Trishna). In the Dhammapada, it is said that “Sarva Dharma Anatma”, that is all entities are without own-being. It must be kept in mind that Lord Buddha's attitude was practical and His primary concern was the salvation of suffering human beings. His silence in response to speculative metaphysical questions indicated His transcendental spirit; that of rising to a plane above lesser beings.

According to Buddhism, everything is relative and impermanent (Anitya, Anicca – in Pali) in the empirical, conditioned world. This is obvious from an inspection of the First and Third of the Four Noble Truths (Chaturaryasatya, Chhattari Aryasachchani – in Pali) enunciated by Lord Buddha in the Dharmachakrapravartana Sutra (Dharmachakkappavattana Sutta – in Pali) which are as follows: First Noble Truth. Life contains suffering. (Duhkha-Aryasatya, Dukkha-Aryasachcha – in Pali). Third Noble Truth. Suffering can be brought to an end. (Duhkha Nirodha-Aryasatya, Dukkha Nirodha-Aryasachcha – in Pali). The Third Noble Truth implies change. Lord Buddha told Rashtrapala “The world is in continuous flux and is impermanent”. In this context, a man can correctly say that he cannot step twice into the same river because although he may continue to see the same river externally from a gross point of view, the water molecules he is seeing at a particular location at any moment are different from the water molecules the moment before and the moment after. One thing disappears, conditioning the appearance of the next in a series of cause and effect. Everything is in a state of becoming something else the next moment. A wheel cannot be separated from its movement. There is no static wheel “behind” the wheel in motion. Things change over time. Everything originates dependent on other factors. That is, all things come into existence as the result (Phala) of an interaction of various causes (Hetu). Each entity is Pratitya-samutpanna (conditioned, Patichcha-samuppanna – in Pali) as well as Pratitya-samutpada (conditioning, Patichcha-samuppada – in Pali). The Law of Dependent Origination is central to Buddhism. For example, anger cannot arise by itself without a cause. The five aggregates, Rupa, Vedana, Sanjna, Samskara and Vijnana, all of which are identified as Anatma (non-Soul) by Lord Buddha in the Anatmalakshana Sutra, are called the Pancha Skandha (the five aggregates, Pancha Khandha – in Pali). Sensations (Vedana) of the physical world of forms (Rupa) are received by the five physical sense organs (Indriya) such as the nose.

The mind feels the mental world. The five physical sense organs and the mind are called the six sensory bases. Sensations lead to perceptions (Sanjna, Sanna – in Pali), which in turn lead through pre-dispositions (Samskara, Sankhara – in Pali), to consciousness (Vijnana, Vinnana – in Pali). In the Yogachara school of Mahayana Buddhism, the concept of Alaya-Vijnana (literally, the abode of consciousness, but commonly translated as store-consciousness or substratum-consciousness) is introduced. The Alaya-Vijnana (Ariyashiki – in Japanese), which maintains the continuum of consciousness, is the mind; hence this school is also called the Chittamatratavada school. Other names of the same school are Vijnanavada and Vijnaptimatratavada. The fundamental concept of the Yogachara (Wei Shi – in Chinese, Yuishiki – in Japanese) school may be expressed by the proposition that the Parinishpanna Swabhava (perfected self-nature, Zhen-shi-xing – in Chinese) is realised when man pierces (Patibheda) through his Parikalpita Swabhava (imagined or illusory self-nature, Fen-bie-xing – in Chinese) and Paratantra Swabhava (conditioned self-nature, Yi-ta-xing – in Chinese).

The Alaya-Vijnana, as conceived in Mahayana Buddhism, is a permanent entity. The Alaya-Vijnana contains all impressions of past actions and all future potentialities. It is the basis of a man's personality. It is also called the Mula-Vijnana, the base-consciousness from which awareness and perception spring. It is also the Tathagatagarbha (Buddha-Matrix, Ru-lai-zang – in Chinese, Nyoraizo – in Japanese), the basis on which a man can become a Buddha. So, latent in every man is a Buddha-like faculty called Buddha-Dhatu (Buddha-Nature, Fo-hsing or Fo-xing – in Chinese). The difference between an Enlightened and a deluded man is that the former man has manifested his Buddha-Dhatu while the latter has not. Thus, broadly speaking, the issue of Buddha-Dhatu is concerned with ascertaining what allows a man to become a Buddha. The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra states that Buddha-Dhatu is everlasting, pure and blissful

and is 'the Self of living beings'. In the same Sutra, it is said "That opinion of theirs is a mistaken opinion, one that is transmitted onwards from person to person, but it is neither beneficial nor conducive to happiness.... Worldly beings do not comprehend the reality of the Self (Atma-Tattva, which is nothing other than Buddha-Dhatu); they fall under the sway of unwholesome friends, and do not understand the (Tathagata's) utterances with implicit meaning, they meditatively cultivate the notion that they lack the Self, even though there is the Self". The Japanese monk Nichiren (1222–1282) maintained that "all living beings possess Buddha-nature". Right meditation leads to spiritual Enlightenment, which is nothing but the full manifestation of the Buddha-Dhatu (or Tathagata-Dhatu) in man. Thus, any man can develop himself through appropriate practice, that is meditation, and become a Buddha. Anyway, for an average man, the summation of all physical and mental processes, processes in constant flux, is perceived empirically as "I". The empirical "I" is ephemeral and impermanent, and is Samvriti-Satya (conventional truth). The concept of Satyadvaya or two categories of truth, Samvriti-Satya (Sammuti-Sacca – in Pali) and Paramartha-Satya (Paramattha-Sacca – in Pali), is an essential element of Buddhism. The word "Samvrita" literally means "covered". The Mahayana Sutralankara, written by Acharya Asanga, says that a Pudgala (person) exists in Pragyapti (designation) (this is Samvriti-Satya) but not in Dravya (substance). Acharya Asanga's lead is followed throughout this article where the Samvriti-Satya of the empirical man is considered in the context of Anatmata or Nairatmya. Once, Hui-hai Tai-chu came to the Zen (a school of Mahayana Buddhism developed in China and widespread in East Asia) master Ma-tsu Tao-i, the first of possibly the four greatest Chinese Zen masters. Ma-tsu asked him: "Why are you here searching when you already possess the treasure you are looking for?", "What treasure?", his interlocutor asked. Ma-tsu replied: "The one who is questioning me right now.". Ma-tsu had an unswerving ability to bring the empirical "I" into focus at just the right moment. On another occasion, when asked, "What is the meaning of

Bodhidharma's coming from India?" Ma-tsu replied with a classic answer: "What is the meaning of your asking this at precisely this moment?"

Conscious of something, one reacts mentally. The mental reactions are of two types : craving and aversion. Craving (Trishna, Tanha – in Pali, Raga – in Sanskrit and Pali) and aversion (Dvesha, Dosa – in Pali) both lead to suffering; it is self-evident that aversion results in suffering and craving results in suffering because if the object of craving remains out of reach, there is suffering. Thus, ultimately, whatever is impermanent is Duhkha or suffering. Trishna Nirodha, Upadana (clinging) Nirodha. The renowned sage Buddhaghosa, the writer of the Visuddhimagga (Vishuddhi Marga, The Path of Purification), has dwelt elaborately on suffering. Taking the lead from Acharya Nagarjuna, the author posits that Duhkha is transient; it arises dependent on something else and also decays into extinction. Duhkha is not self-determining; its existence and character are attributable to factors that condition its origin and subsequent transformation. Coming into existence and dying out of existence, Duhkha lacks any trace of permanence. Thus, it may be said that Duhkha lacks a Swabhava or Swalakshana and is characterised by Nihswabhava (absence of Self-Nature). Thus Duhkha is empty (Shunya). The author is therefore, led to formulate the proposition: Duhkhameva Shunyam. Because Duhkha is ephemeral, the author can expand the Sanskrit sentence to this: Duhkhameva Anityam evam Shunyam The perception of the emptiness of Duhkha allows one to let go of Duhkha and thus be released of the hold that Duhkha has on him. This is, of course, intended as a Mahayana Buddhist theoretical complement to Vipashyana meditation and is in no way a substitute for Vipashyana meditation. The notion of Buddha-Dhatu is a very productive concept. Any man is bound to indulge in more Enlightened behaviour and his meditation is bound to become better if he remembers that he has Buddha-Dhatu in him.

The capacity to tread the path to Nirvana is already in man, he just has to use it. It is a process of uncovering one's Buddha-Dhatu. The more defilement a man has in his mind, the more unenlightened he is. Erasing the defilements, leads to Bodhi (Enlightenment, P'u-ti – in Chinese, Bodai – in Japanese) and Nirvana. (In the Dharmachakrapravartana Sutra, Lord Buddha said that Nirvana is not subject to grief, defilement (Klesha, Kilesa – in Pali, Bonno - in Japanese), disease (Vyadhi), decay (Jara), and death (Mrityu, Marana). In other words, Nirvana is beyond cause and effect, that is, it transcends conditioned phenomena. Lord Buddha also said “Nirvanam Paramam Sukham”. Nirvana is Apratitya-samutpanna and Asamskrita (unconditioned, Apatichcha-samuppanna and Asankhata – in Pali, Wu-yin – in Chinese) and, according to Vasubandhu of the Yogachara (the practice of Yoga) school of Mahayana Buddhism, is the Parinishpanna Swabhava. It is interesting to note that in the Lankavatara Sutra, a Mahayana Sutra associated with the Yogachara school, Nirvana is described as the seeing of everything as it is. Nirvana is a positive Absolute and is Nitya (without beginning and end, Nicca – in Pali). Nirvana means a state of Mukti (Mutti – in Pali) which means freedom or Vimukti (Vimutti – in Pali) which means absolute freedom. Nirvana also denotes Satya (Sacca – in Pali) which means Truth and Shanti (Santi – in Pali) which means Peace. A synonym for Nirvana is Moksha (liberation, Mokkha – in Pali). Nirvana is a state of absolute perfection. Shariputra, the famous historical disciple of Lord Buddha, described Nirvana as the extinction of desire, hatred and illusion. In mystical language, Nirvana is the experience of standing face-to-face with Reality (Shi – in Chinese). Nirvana is equated with Bodhi and is the Paramartha-Satya. Nirvana is sometimes expressed as negative of negative such as the cessation of suffering, of craving, of aversion, etc. This need not result in any confusion. In Sanskrit, sometimes positive things are expressed as negatives of negatives as the word “Arogya” which means recuperation from illness and the word “Amrita” which means immortal. Further, as mathematics proves, negative of negative is always positive.

Nirvana is a freeing from the chains of a false sense of individuality. Nirvana is a state of non-duality (Advaita or Advaya); a state where the illusion of a false sense of “I” (Parikalpita Swabhava, Fen-bie-xing – in Chinese) does not exist. Expressed Differently, Liberation From The Illusion Of Separateness Of The Individual Self From The Whole Is Nirvana. Freedom Is, Nirvana Is, Truth Is.

Because contact of the six sensory bases with the external world do not result in any reactions in an Enlightened man, he is free. His mind is like a lamp that does not flicker. Non-attachment towards all beings and everything including the concepts of “I” and “Mine” is a characteristic of an Enlightened mind. The absence of ego in an Enlightened man leads him to adopt an attitude of dispassion and selflessness towards everything in his physical and mental world. He has risen above his previous mental conditioning (Samskara). He is virtuous. He is always cheerful, happy and optimistic. He radiates light wherever he goes. He is wise and compassionate (Mahakarunika) and does everything for the good of the world.

Rabindranath Tagore and American Unitarianism

A Study in Cross-Cultural Religious Faith

Nikhiles Guha

India was on the religious map of American Unitarianism for a hundred years before Rabindranath Tagore first set his foot in New York (27 October, 1912) on the way to Urbana-Illinois, where the first three months of his first visit to the USA where spent (November 1-19 January, 1913). He was received warmly by the local Unitarian community. Unitarian contact with the Brahmo Samaj had developed from the time that Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, had translated the Upanishads and the Vedant from the original Sanskrit into English in 1816. *The Christian Reformer*, an important mouthpiece of the British Unitarians, and *The North American Review*, the leading American journal of the time, devoted considerable space to a discussion of Rammohun's ideas in their columns in the issues dated January and March 1818 respectively. News about Rammohun was also published in the *Unitarian Miscellany and Christian Monitor* (February 1822 and January 1823) edited by the Rev. Jared Sparks from Baltimore. Rammohun was also in correspondence among others with David Reed, the editor of *The Christian Register*, a weekly Unitarian journal published from Boston, and the Rev. Henry Ware, Sr. (Hollis Professor of Divinity at the University of Harvard)¹ Towards the end of his life, when Rammohun was in England, he was received warmly by "the chief Unitarian families of the time, the Estlins, the Carpenters, the Foxes, and the like."²

On the strength of these memories, the American Unitarian Association established an Unitarian church in Calcutta in 1855. It functioned for three decades under the leadership of Charles A. Dall, with whose death in 1885 it closed down. Dall attracted considerable attention in Bengali society, being

intimate with both Raja Radhakanta Dev (1783-1867), the conservative leader, and representatives of the 'Young Bengal' group. He was also quite familiar with the younger members of the Brahma Samaj under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884), who breathed new life into the Samaj in the middle years of the nineteenth century. P.C. Mazoomdar (1840-1905), a prominent member of the Brahma Samaj of India established by Keshab Chandra in 1866, attended the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. Present with him on the occasion were also Swami Vivekananda and the Buddhist monk Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933). Mazoomdar had already visited America in 1883, about the time the American Unitarian Church in Calcutta was closing down. He had won the hearts of the American Unitarians and was appointed a member of the Advisory Council Selection Committee for the World Parliament of Religions on the recommendation of American Unitarian Association leaders. He delivered the Lowell Lectures at Cambridge, Massachusetts in October-November 1893. The American Unitarian Association thereafter voted an annual stipend to support his cause, which continued till his death in 1905. Mazoomdar was also an invitee to the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations for the American Unitarian Association in 1900, which bore his entire expenses for the tour. He was greeted with warm response in various cities of America, following his appearance at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and returned to that country on a similarly successful lecture tour in 1899.

The liberal, non-sectarian religious attitude inherent in both the Brahma faith and American Unitarianism, no doubt, helped them to come close to each other. Tagore could thus be said to be continuing a process that had started earlier. As a modern American Unitarian scholar points out, "the similarity of such ideas as the significance of Asia's message for the West, very much a part of Tagore's

lectures in England and America and of Keshab's later preachings cannot be ignored."³ However, there was an important difference. While so far Indian preachers in America dwelt mostly with spiritual themes based on Hindu tradition, Rabindranath was above all a poet. In fact, he was often careful to point out that his calling was that of a poet, not a guru or saint. Despite such statements on his part, it would be wise not to press this distinction too far, for poets are (as we know) endowed with their own philosophy, their way of looking at life. This was specially the case with Rabindranath, whose writings were always inspired by a search for the significance of the relationship between man and the universe, and of man-in-the universe. At the same time we should remember that, starting from the year 1884, Rabindranath was for a long time the Secretary of the Adi Brahma Samaj. He upheld the Brahma cause in public and was trying to introduce reforms within the institution almost till the time of his departure for the West in 1912-13. He did not even hesitate to engage in controversy for a time with the great novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894) In this regard, ---- an incident which he regretted later.

The forms of literary expression employed by Rabindranath in England and America during his visit to the West during 1912-13 were different. His aim in England was to place his poems in translation for judgement by the literary world there. For this purpose he had brought with him English translations of the *Gitanjali*. The appreciations showered on him by the leading men of letters in England are too well-known to be repeated here. In fact, the applause was too much for him to bear and so he retired, ---- first to a country house in Butterfield in Staffordshire and then, when the weather grew colder, to another country house in Gloucestershire before returning to London for a few days prior to his departure for the US. His son Rathindranath had already been admitted along with another Bengali student to the University of Urbana-in-Illinois to study agriculture

and the poet came to spend the last two months of the year 1912 with them. The weather conditions pleased him. The air was pure and the place free from the bustle of main towns. The poet felt relaxed once more. But, a further task was waiting for him.

The success gained by the early preachers of Hinduism in America had led to the arrival of many fake god-men in that country. They aimed at nothing more than making money. But their presence created an adverse effect on the minds of the local people. In England they would have been soon exposed. But, in America they succeeded in deluding a section of the women. In fact, it was to prevent one of them from lecturing on Hinduism, that Rabindranath decided to deliver his first public lecture at an Unitarian Centre, the Unity Club in Urbana, on November 10, 1912. The topic chosen for discussion was "World Realisation." The lecture was later incorporated under a changed title ("The Relation of the Individual to the Universe") in *Sadhana : The Realisation of Life*, a collection of essays by the poet which appeared in 1913. The lecture met with such popular approval that the poet thereafter had to deliver a discourse on some philosophical topic each Sunday during his stay at Urbana. These also were later included in the *Sadhana* under the title "Soul Consciousness" and "Realization in Action". Thus, while the poet had dedicated himself to translations and the writing of poetry in England, in America he was absorbed in the writing of philosophical essays.

Rabindranath's philosophy was not something apart from his poetry. He was born in a family that had played a leading role in the religious reform movement in the country during the nineteenth century. A mystic by nature, his poems were the natural outpourings of his soul, *Gitanjali* being no exception. Though Rabindranath did not believe in organized religion, he had, as might be expected from a person of his religious background, a natural desire to meet representatives of the Unitarian faith. Thus, as Rothenstein writes in his book *Men*

And Memories, “One of the first persons whom Tagore wanted to know was Stopford Brooke; for Tagore, being a prominent member of the Brahmo Samaj, which was closely allied to Unitarianism, had heard much of him and Estlin Carpenter.” Stopford Brooke; was, of course, a very respected literary critic and was one of the first to whom Rothenstein sent the English translations of the *Gitanjali*. He was overwhelmed, “I have read them”, he wrote back,” with more than admiration, with great gratitude, for their spiritual help and for the joy they bring and confirm, and for the love of beauty which they deepen far more than I can tell. I wish I were worthy of them.”⁴

Resemblances between the ideas of Christianity and *Gitanjali* were noted by the missionary C. F. Andrews, who had come to India in 1904 and was present at the meeting at Hampstead Heath where Yeats had first read out the poems in translation. In an article contributed to the *Modern Review* of January, 1913 under the title “With Rabindra in England”, he disagreed with the manner in which Yeats interpreted the poems. Andrews wrote :

“He (Yeats) seemed somewhat obsessed by his idea of what was ‘Oriental’ ---- a dangerous theme for one who knows the East only through books. The fact, the outstanding fact, was rather this, that Rabindra is universal – Indian, Oriental, it is true, but none the less universal, as Shakespeare and the Hebrew Prophets are universal. Again, the comparison with the ‘Renaissance’ spirit seemed to me to miss the mark. The Renaissance spirit was more or less pagan; it leapt forward to the embrace of beauty too often at the sacrifice of moral purity. Rabindra was of the company of the ‘pure in heart’ who ‘see God’. His joy in nature came through this inner purity : this inner purity had its source in a

renunciation which the Renaissance spirit recklessly refused to undergo, as it fed greedily from the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge.”

Andrews clarified his position at a speech delivered in the Viceregal lodge at Simla on 26 May, 1913. It was published almost immediately after in the July issue of the *Modern Review*, 1913. At the end of the address, he concluded :

“The atmosphere of modern Bengal has been deeply permeated with Christian ideals and the sensitive nature of a great and noble poet should not live in that atmosphere without feeling their power. In all Rabindranath’s writings I have found an appreciation of the Christian spirit in its purest form, and this has been, if I may make a personal confession, the deepest joy of my friendship and fellowship with him. But, as I have said, the main source of his religious conceptions, the source indeed of his appreciation of Christianity itself, ---- I find not in the vague and diffused atmosphere of modern Calcutta, but in his own deep study of the Upanishads, in the Buddhist ideal, in the Vaishnava hymns and in the sayings of Kabir.”

The small town of Urbana in America’s mid-West was then setting up its first Unitarian church. Mrs. Mayce F. Seymour, who was the poet’s hostess at the time of this arrival there, recounted her experiences in an article published in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (Vol. XXV, Summer 1959). “It seems a happy coincidence”, she said, “that at the very moment that a liberal faith was manifesting itself publicly in Urbana, the representative of a great religious movement in India, the Brahma Samaj, already associated with the Unitarian churches in America, should have appeared there.” The poet’s appearance increased the reverence for him. To quote Mrs. Seymour again,

“As for the Poet, when I showed his portrait to Rev. Vail, the Unitarian clergyman, he exclaimed, ‘I was going to ask you where you got that beautiful head of Christ?’ Later, when Mrs. Kelley came to call, she murmured in awed

tones as she held the likeness in her hands, 'It looks like the ideal head of Christ.'
”

It was before this small group of admirers at Urbana that the poet first read out the essays that later went into the making of his book *Sadhana*. They also had the privilege of listening to the translations later included in the collections of poems *Gardener* (1913) and *Fruit-Gathering* (1916). The poems of the *Gitanjali* reminded Mrs. Seymour of the musical perfection of the Psalms. Had an artist been present at the evening sessions which gathered round the poet at Urbana, he might have depicted, Mrs. Seymour imagined, a scene as follows.

“Sketching in hazily as a background the quiet group of listeners, most of us still young, open-minded, and sensitive to the outpourings of great ideas and to poetical expression, he would have concentrated on the central figure of the poet. He would have portrayed a commanding presence, of great beauty of countenance and dignity of bearing, of soft tan seated by the evening lamp, his face framed by thickly waving locks and flowing beard, his dark expressive eyes fixed on his manuscript, the leaves of which he turned with beautiful, tapering fingers.”

It was during his stay at Urbana that Rabindranath received a letter of invitation from Charles William Wendte (1844-1931), Secretary of the National Federation of Religious Liberals, requesting him to address a meeting of the organization that was to be held at Rochester from January 28-30, 1913. Wendte's letter dated December 10, 1912 expressed the desire that the poet speak on “Race Conflict”. It was a topic that had agitated the Unitarians for long, race being associated with slavery, which the Unitarians by and large condemned. Channing and Theodore Parker, both of whom had a great influence on the Brahmo social movement, were vehement in their criticism of the institution. Rabindranath too, coming from a land ruled by a foreign power, had from his youth devoted much thought to the problem of racial arrogance that he found round him. The problem

of colour bar was the object of criticism in an essay that he had written in his youth on the relationship between Englishmen and Indians in 1893 (“Ingraj O Bharatbasi”). His vision was not restricted to India but included references to the way early European settlers had exterminated the aboriginal population of Australia and America. The experience of Africa and the colonial people living in Asia was also before his eyes. The scramble for empire among the European powers towards the close of the nineteenth century alarmed the poet. His only hope in the face of the impending crisis lay, he said time and again, with the liberal intellectuals within the European tradition, who had raised their voice against the tide of aggression. This was also the content of the poet’s lecture at the conference at Rochester, which was held by the National Federation of Religious Liberals in association with the Free Religious Association of America of which Wendte was at the time President, besides being the Secretary of Foreign Relations of the American Unitarian Association. Writes David Robinson :

“In the first decade of the twentieth century he became the principal force behind a series of international religious congresses that brought American Unitarians together with European and Asian religious liberals. Wendte’s hopes that these meetings would eventually develop into a real religious movement were crushed by World War I.”⁵

The Rochester conference brought Rabindranath in contact with the famous German philosopher Rudolf Christoph Eucken (1646-1926), who had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1908. Eucken believed that it was man’s duty and privilege to overcome nature through continuous spiritual striving. He found a kindred soul in Rabindranath and was extremely appreciative of the *Gitanjali*. Wendte had also requested Rabindranath to deliver an address on the Brahmo movement while at Rochester, but whether the lecture was actually delivered we do not know. The Unitarian journal *Christian Register* (Vol.92) in

its report of the Rochester Congress remarked that the words the words of the poet were the noblest uttered in the meeting. None of the delegates present was as well-reputed in the world of literature as he.⁶ That the poet enjoyed the experience of Rochester is indicated by his letter to Wendte dated June 12, 1913 in which he expressed a desire to attend the 1913 Congress of Religious Liberals at Paris that year. Ultimately his wish did not materialise. His name was announced as President of the International Congress of Liberal Religions which was scheduled to be held in Bombay in 1915 but never took place as the First World War intervene.⁷

Rabindranath returned to Urbana in 1916 for a short while during his second tour of the United States, when he renewed his old acquaintances. But, it was the earlier visit that was really important. It renewed Unitarian perceptions about India. The American Unitarian missionary Jabez Sunderland visited Calcutta and met prominent intellectuals of the city in December, 1913. Sunderland's *book India In Bondage* was published by Ramananda Chattopadhyay, editor of the *Modern Review* (a leading monthly journal of the time) in 1929. The small group that Rabindranath had met at Urbane observed his birthday each year for a long time.

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BRAHMOISM: RELIGION OF PEACE

“The religion of the Brahmo Samaj is the religion of peace and concord, It says, let there be no more discord and division among the children of God – for there is but one God, one Church, one sacred bond and brotherhood. Between man and man there is no barrier; they are all children of one Father. All old feuds between man and man, between nations and nations, sects and sects, between religion and science, between priest and the layman, between God and the world may cease now.”

Who is to stop pilgrims running amok in the forests

Jay Mazoomdaar

Independent journalist and film maker

Millions of pilgrims enter India's protected forests, including many high security national parks and tiger reserves, to visit temples. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, the crowd swells to thousands. Mega annual events attract lakhs of devotees.

It is impossible to monitor such crowds when they fan out inside forests, camp, lop firewood, cook, bathe and litter. Human waste causes contamination and plastic waste chokes herbivores. Too many speeding vehicles threaten wild animals and blaring loudspeakers scare them away. It's anybody's guess what poachers make of the open season.

No administration stops pilgrims from entering protected forests. But this month, lakhs of pilgrims taking over Ranthambhore tiger reserve for the annual Ganesh mela has made news. Frustrated with the now-two-month-long interim ban slapped by the SC on tourism in core tiger forests, many are accusing the authorities of double standards for allowing rowdy pilgrims while shutting the door on law-abiding tourists.

A religious congregation cannot be challenged in India without grave consequences. Understandably, the Sawai Madhopur district administration and the Ranthambhore management pleaded helplessness. To be fair, the administration worked admirably to remove tonnes of garbage as soon as the fair got over. But the educated, liberal, tiger-loving tourist cannot quite stomach the rural pilgrim's wanton disregard for wildlife and forest laws and the state's helplessness compounded by vote bank politics.

But is any of it surprising? For the politician, allowing people access to their forest temples is far easier than ensuring food, shelter and jobs. The state, we know, is secular and the state knows the convenience of absence. The average Indian pilgrim is not known for public hygiene. Those familiar with the hinterland will know how every household keeps the indoors clean by dumping every bit of garbage outside the door and how an open sewage is nobody's problem. The forests, remember, are the outdoors.

Not all pilgrims entering forests are poor or rural or uneducated. But none of India's billion salt-of-the-earth villagers believes that a little lopping can harm a forest or taking an oily dip in a stream contaminates it. Forests naturally have a liberating effect on millions used to squatting by village bushes. Also, they are either blissfully fatalistic about animal encounters or aware of their strength in numbers and the resulting dispensability of a few for earning a little compensation from the government.

The welfare state, of course, is never totally absent. During the Ganesh festival in 2010, the Ranthambhore management regularly baited a wayward tiger that had earlier killed a man, to keep it from the pilgrims. The priorities are readily switched during such unusual times because no reserve manager wants to face a local politician leading the funeral procession of a wildlife attack victim, with a devout mob in tow.

However harmful to the wilderness and unacceptable to many of us, these are Indian realities. To feel outraged by these is to proclaim a complete lack of understanding of or an arrogant disregard for how our societies function far away from feel-good urban activism and debates. Sadly, nestled in this mock outrage,

the tiger-loving tourist's real argument – why deny us our little indulgences when they get away with doing so much – does not hold water.

Laws require social resonance to be effective. Murder, for example, is both legally punishable and socially unacceptable. But certain laws – barring child marriage, for example – took many decades to gain social acceptability. Conservation laws that make certain areas out of bounds for people are barely three to four decades old.

Unlike collecting firewood or poaching which are issues of material rights and have always been determined by the ruler, religious rights have almost always been a given. So when they enter the forests in thousands, the rural pilgrims do not reckon they are breaking any law. They are simply following a tradition as most of these temples were in place much before the green legislations or even the state of India came to be.

Increasing use of loudspeakers, plastic and cooking gas is evident. Gangs of young mischief makers can at times get innovative. Otherwise, the pilgrims still follow the same routine they did, say, 50 years ago. Much of it is callous but if they camp outdoors, they must also cook, bathe, eat and defecate. It is simply beyond their comprehension how any of it can possibly harm the forest or wildlife.

Nature and the elements are worshiped in all oriental religions. Trees and animals are revered as powerful symbols. Religion has been the reason why most Indian societies are remarkably tolerant towards the wild. The result is no less than a miracle and all carnivore species, except one, survive in the world's most densely

populated country. Yet, no forest temple trust or pilgrims I met ever claimed to be conservationists.

The rural devout does not know the science of conservation. For long, it has been a way of Indian life. Growing population and shrinking wilderness have changed that equilibrium in recent times when even traditional lopping and grazing leads to deforestation because of the sheer scale involved. But killing wild animals is still a taboo in most parts. In fact, the biggest threat from pilgrims is their feeding of wild animals. They have no idea why it is not good for the wild; just like they cannot fathom how bathing, cooking or defecating inside forests can possibly damage the environment.

On the other hand, most tourists and hoteliers assert that the tiger would not be secure but for tourism. The majority of these tiger-lovers knowingly flout the rules when it suits them. Some of these violations, such as blocking animal corridors or baiting big cats, are criminal offences. But even seemingly inconsequential acts, such as crowding or getting too close to wild animals for better viewing, are far more condemnable than the pilgrim's excesses because these are carried out with full knowledge of potential consequences.

If the conservationist indeed feels outraged by the rowdy pilgrim, that outrage better be directed inward. The biggest failure of modern conservation practiced by the urban elite is its inability to go beyond convenient symbolism. Instead of taking the message to the masses living around and affecting the forests, it is happy to create urban constituencies of glorified tourists (experts, activists, media et al), affluent tiger lovers and tourism service providers who seek to monopolies the country's best forests for their intellectual and business pursuits.

It is already beyond the financial, even social, means of the average Indian villager to enter the tiger reserve next door as a tourist. When they run amok inside the same forests on certain auspicious days of the year, it is a blatant reminder from the grassroots of our exclusionist conservation. It does not demand outrage but introspection.

- First Post

THOU hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.

I am uneasy at heart when I have to leave my accustomed shelter; I forget that there abides the old in the new, and there also thou abidest.

Through birth and death, in the world or in others, however thou leadest me it is thou, the same, the one companion of my endless life who ever linkest my heart with bonds of joy to the unfamiliar.

When one knows thee, then alien there is none, the door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the one in the play of the many.

- *Rabindranath Tagore*

Freedoms Religious Foundations

Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee

What does our Western Civilization stand for ? Let us suppose that today we were to put this question first to a non Western and then to our Western selves. What would be the answers that we should get ? To day, I believe, the two answers would be very different from one another. I think the non-Western's answer would be 'Oh, the Western Civilization stand for technology. And I fancy our own answer would be that the Western civilization stands for the sacredness of the individual human personality.

Now, let us imagine the same question being put several hundred years ago to our Western ancestors and to their non-Western contemporaries. I think the answers that those two parties would have given would not have been different. I think they would have been identical with one another. And I think this identical past answers would have been different again from either of the two answers that our question would receive today. I think in the past, non-Westerns and Westerns would have agreed with each other in answering that the Western civilization stood for Christianity. No doubt they might have disagreed, both about the merits of Christianity and about the standard maintained by the West in the practice of Christianity. But, subject to that, I think they would have been right in holding that the West stood for Christianity, As Christianity was, at that time, the West's avowed and genuine ideal, however far the West might fall in its practice from attaining its Christian ideals.

Then I could come to the point which leads us to the present day. I would say that during the recent age, when our Western society has been enjoying a temporary ascendancy in the world, the West has been remarkably indifferent to the religious

foundations of its freedom. This unchallengeable ascendancy that the West did enjoy within living memory in the world lasted for more than two hundred years, I believe two hundred and fifty years.

Since 1914, the situation has changed. Within these last years, the West has lost its previous ascendancy – and, at the same time, it has lost its previous confidence in itself. Today, the West is confronted by formidable new challenges from outside which it has not the power to meet by the old simple method of imposing its will on all outsiders by force. When one does not command a decisive superiority of force over one's neighbours, one's only alternative is to argue one's case with them, if one is not willing to resign oneself to see one's case go completely by default. And this is the position in which the West finds itself today. We can no longer command the assent of Asia and Africa by armaments – we have to win their consent, if we can, the Western outlook and the Western Way of life are better than the rival systems which are, now, once again, competing with our Western system, for the allegiance of the human race.

And one cannot, of course, put a case to their people, unless one has first examined it oneself. And then further, we should now find ourselves, I think, compelled to re-examine the foundations of our belief, even if we had no external challenges to meet let us try and think away communism, think away Russia – I do not think that abolition of communism in Russia would let us off having to re-examine the foundations of our beliefs. Because why is our Western way of life being challenged once again by non-Westerners today? Because within these last forty-one years the West has lost power and the Western way of life has lost credit. And behind these two losses that we have suffered is one and the same cause; what has enfeebled the West and has, at the same time, discredited it is the

atrocious- you might call it fratricidal-warfare within the bosom of our own Western society which we have been fighting since 1914.

The record of this betrayal has been written by us into history. It is lain to the rest of the world and it stares us, ourselves, in the face. The great security of our Western civilization has been our belief in the sacredness of the individual human personality, and yet, we have allowed freedom to be overthrown and abused and derided in several great Western countries by native Western rulers, to whose rule the peoples of those countries have submitted for long periods of years.

So today we cannot any longer avoid asking ourselves in all the countries of the West. What are the foundations of our Western freedom? Are these foundations firm? If they are not firm now, have they perhaps been firm in the past? And if they have decayed, is it possible for us to restore them? What are the conditions for keeping individual human beings free?

I think that the first and the most fundamental of these conditions looks, at first sight, rather, paradoxical. I could put it this way – that man cannot be free unless he recognizes the truth that he is not the sovereign independent lord of creation. It is put in the 6th and 7th verse of the 82nd Psalm – ‘I have said, Ye are gods :... But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.’ When man mistakes himself for God, he is sounding the death knell of human freedom, because when man comes to believe that he is God, he falls to worshipping himself; his human idol is not the individual human being, it’s the collective power of corporate humanity - the great beast, Leviathan. You remember that semi-mythical beast - that half whale and half a hippopotamus in the Old Testament - and you remember how that name, Leviathan, was taken by an English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, three hundred years ago, for the title of a famous book. He wrote

that book in a time which, like our own time was a painful time to live in. He wrote it with a sense of consternation at the demoniac character of the spiritual forces that had been let loose by the seventeenth century Civil War in England between the Parliament and King Charles I. So I would say, when man worships himself, he loses his freedom and he loses it because what he worships is not his individual freedom, but his collective power. The idolization of collective human power turns all the idolators into slaves and I would add that the most abject slave of all is the nominal despot in whose person this idolized collective human power has so often been symbolized.

Technology, instead of religion, is what our Western civilization has, in fact come to stand for by our time, some three hundred years after the seventeenth century beginning of our revolutionary Western transfer of spiritual values. That would be the diagnosis of any non-Western observer of our Western civilization today. And, in making that diagnosis, would not the non-Western observer of our twentieth century Western civilization be substantially right? And yet, at the same time, we ourselves are speaking the truth when we declare that, for our part as we see it, what our western civilization stands for today for us, is not technology, but is still the sacredness of the human individual personality. We twentieth century Westerners hold personal freedom just as sacred as our predecessors did, but here is the paradox of our present position. We still place supreme value on this traditional Western spiritual treasure. In becoming devotees of science and technology, we have not ceased to be devotees of freedom; but in relinquishing our hold on Christianity, we have deprived our belief in freedom from its religious foundations. And if I have been right in finding those foundations in Christian beliefs about God and man as a part of Christianity's heritage from Israel's our present position in the West is not merely a paradoxical one, but also one that cannot last. We are, in fact confronted, I believe by two alternatives between

which, sooner or later, we shall find ourselves forced to choose. Either we shall lose our freedom or else, if we preserve it, we shall preserve it by re-establishing it on the religious foundations without which, in my belief, we cannot permanently stand.

I am sure that I am speaking for Westerners on this side of the Atlantic as well as on the other side, if I say that today all Westerners are determined to preserve that respect for the freedom of the individual human personality that is so precious a part of our Western cultural heritage. But mere determination, however strong and however sincere, does not, of course, carry with it automatically the power to put our will into effect. If it is our will to preserve our Western heritage of freedom, then it must also be our will to re-establish this freedom's religious foundations.

But here we find ourselves willing something that a sheer act of human will cannot accomplish, because religion is one of man's spiritual treasures that is not entirely at man's own disposal. Religion is not like a dog we first drive away with a kick and then call back to heel by a whistle, just as the fancy may take us or our human convenience may demand. It may be convenient for non-religious purposes to revive religion. It might be convenient for us Westerners in the plight in which we find ourselves today, but it is never possible to revive religion just for non-religious, utilitarian reasons. The only motive for reviving religion that has any chance of bringing religion back to life is a sincere and disinterested thirst for religion for its own sake, and not for any incidental, useful consequences. We may hope and pray that with the help of God's grace this pure thirst for religion, for its own sake, may spring up again in our hearts, but that is a miracle that cannot be performed by any form of social engineering. The miracle may be a necessary prelude to the executive of the social engineer's plan for social

reconstruction, but he cannot perform the miracle himself just because it would be convenient to him if it had happened.

The truths of religion are apprehended at a deeper level of the soul than the Intellectual surface. They spring out from the same deep level as the truths of poetry. None of us would think of trying to translate an inspired poem into the language of either philosophy or science. We should be deterred from doing that by our foreknowledge that if we did try our hand at translating the language of poetry to the language of science or philosophy, all that we should achieve would be to empty the poem of its poetry. And I believe what holds good for poetry holds good for religion too. When we try to translate religious inspiration into the language of science or philosophy, we simply drain the inspiration away. The truth is, religion, like poetry, has a language of its own and it cannot be translated out of its native language into other.

But this intellectual stumbling block is not the most formidable, I fear, that a Western revival of Christianity will meet with. Let us remind ourselves once again what element in Christianity it was that first caused the miscarriage of medieval Western Christendom and, in the end, brought about the seventeenth century Western spiritual revolution, first against fanaticism, then against religion itself, and is still going on today. If I have been right in my diagnosis, the baneful element in Christianity is its fanaticism and Christian fanaticism, like the Christian beliefs about God and man that are the foundations of our Western freedom, is, unhappily, also part of Christianity's heritage from Israel, Christianity, I will put it, inherited from Israel a field in which a crop had already been sown and this crop is a mixture of wheat and tares. Christianity inherited from Israel the revelation that man's freedom is precious to God because it is God's gift to man as man's distinctive human birthright, but Christianity, at the

same time, inherited from Israel another picture of God and man which so differed that the two pictures seem really to be incompatible. In this other picture God stands not for love but for jealousy. He has revealed the truth about himself and about man, not to all mankind but to a chosen people – for one, the chosen people may be Israel, for another it may be the Christian Church, for yet another it may be the Islamic community; but the idea is always the same and this revelation of the truth is unique and exclusive, it alone is valid and its recipients alone are true believers. That is the element in Christianity that made Christianity a source of strife and scandal in Western Christendom from, I would say, the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century of our era. And the tragedy of our own past history warns us that if a revival of this traditional exclusive and intolerant element in Christianity, the same cause would almost certainly once again, produce the same tragic effects. So, can we reharvest the wheat in Christianity without reharvesting the tares? Can we re-enter into communion with the God who is love, without relapsing into the worship of the jealous God whose fanatical devotees have worked such havoc in the past-whether they have been Christian devotees, or Muslem devotees or Jewish devotees of that vision of God?

This, it seems to me, is the question on which our future hangs, because, in my belief, we can not preserve our freedom without reestablishing its religious foundations, and god's love is the only foundation on which man's freedom can stand.

Brahmo Samaj, Patna

Manabendra Choudhury

The Balika Vidyalaya at Bankipore (Patna) was established on 7th December, 1930 by the Bankipore Brahmo Samaj as a middle school at Aghore Prakash Sishu Sadan, the birth place of Late Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. The school gradually developed into a high school and Board of Secondary Education gave recognition to the Balika Vidyalaya on 7th April, 1945.

The Brahmo Samaj, Patna is a religious Institution also engaged in educational, social and philanthropic work. It took over charge of Balika Vidyalaya from Bankipore Brahmo Samaj in 1962. The Board of Secondary Education, Bihar declared the school as minority managed school on 11th August, 1965. Till then the school had no building of its own. But due to personal efforts made by Late Dr. S. M. Ghoshal a devoted Brahmo and an eminent Physician of Bihar, purchased a plot of land at Rajendra Nagar, Patna from Improvement Trust, Patna and constructed a new building for the high school named as Rabindra Balika Vidyalaya. This was implemented with the approval of the Borad of Secondary Education.

In the year 2004, due to effort made by Sri Manabendra Choudhury, Secretary of Brahmo Samaj, Patna and the school, with the help of some members of the school managing committee, established a new Inter college (+2) for the girls in the school campus named as Rabindra Balika Inter College. The college started its functioning from 1st September, 2004 in the old school building. Now the Inter College is functioning in its four storied new building from 9th May, 2006. Both secondary and senior secondary (+2) schools are one of the best educational institutions in the Patna district, functioning under the able guidance of the following members of the managing committee of the school and Inter College.

1. Dr. (Prof) Sumanta Neyogi - President
2. Rtd. Justice Sri Sadananda Mukherjee - Vice President

3. Sri Manabendra Choudhury - Secretary
4. Sri Mihir Kumar Ghosh - Member
5. Smt. Shila Choudhury - Member
6. Dr. (Mrs) Ratna Mukherjee - Member & Ex-officio
7. Sri Lakshmi Narayan Das - Member
8. Smt. Bulbul Sircar - Member
9. Dr. (Mrs) Aditiya Poddar - Member
10. Ms. Sulagna Mukherjee - Ex-officio member (school)
11. Smt. Nilu Sahay - Teachers' representative (school)
12. Dr. (Mrs) Sucharita Goswami Choudhury - Teachers' representative (college)

The main objectives of the Brahma Samaj, Patna is to run and take care of the smooth functioning of both School and Inter College. The members of Brahma Samaj, Patna takes active participation during Maghotsava and Bhadrotsava.

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Brahmos and sympathisers of The Brahmo Samaj are requested to donate generously to one or more of the following Funds of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj according to their choice.

1. General Fund
2. Mission Fund
3. Charity Fund
4. Building Repair Fund
5. Mahila Bhavan Fund
6. Balya Bhavan Fund
7. Medical Aid Fund
8. Indigent Brahmo Family Fund
9. Indian Messenger Fund
10. Tattwakaumudi Fund
11. Publication Fund
12. Sadhan Ashram Fund
13. Calcutta Congregation Fund
14. Brahmo Samaj Relief Mission Fund
15. Mofussil Brahmo Samaj Fund
16. Library Fund
17. Brahmo Samaj Education Society Fund
18. Hindu Widows' Home Fund

Please send the donations in A/c payee Cheque or Draft favouring "**Sadharan Brahmo Samaj**"
