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CONTENTS

	Page No.
Invocation	4
Editorial	5
ADVAITA-VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY: SHANKARACHARYA AND RAMMOHUN (Part – 1) – Rajib Gangopadhyay	7
The Birdman of Bengal – Ajoy Home by Sutapa Roychowdhury	12
The Problem of World Peace – C. H. Huner	14
Brahmo Samaj	15
Acknowledgement	16

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in agreement with it.

INVOCATION

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

- M. K. Gandhi

* * * * *

O Lord, I pray that Thou be kind to me, pour
Thy grace into my heart and be my resting place for ever and ever
None else can guide me to that joy, blessedness and peace.

- Tukaram

* * * * *

For great men, religion is a way of making friends; small people make religion a
fighting tool.

- APJ Abdul Kalam

Editorial

Let us begin the year by making a wish. Let us pray that the world may thrive in peace and tranquility. It is only sane and humane to walk into the future with an open mind, burying the hatchets of all our past hatred and grievances against one other. Let our minds be fortified with the awareness of love, bonhomie and compassion towards our fellow beings.

We are on the threshold of 'Maghotsab', the annual celebration of a universal spiritual awakening of our country under the leadership of Raja Rammohun Roy. His message was universal as well as humanitarian, that not only touched many of our countrymen but also our fellow humans across continents.

The first prayer of the Brahma Sabha, that subsequently became the Brahma Samaj, was held on 20th of August, 1828, or on the 6th day of the Bengali month of Bhadra. This day is still celebrated as Bhadratsab.

But soon the need for its own premises was deeply felt and a prayer hall was built in Chitpur Road. The idea of a Universal religion, acceptable to all, was given a formal shape through the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj, which was drafted by Raja Rammohun Roy and his fellow believers. It was formerly registered on 8th of January, 1830, and the place of worship or the first prayer hall of the Brahma Samaj was inaugurated on 23rd of January 1830, at Chitpur Road, opening its gates to all - irrespective of caste, creed, gender, sect and religion. It marked the formal establishment of a public prayer hall dedicated to the worship of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being which is at the core of all faiths.

The Maghotsab commemorates this momentous occasion. Since 23rd January 1830 coincided with the eleventh day of the Bengali month of Magh, the celebrations came to be known as Maghotsab. This annual occasion is a reminder of the legacy and the responsibility that is bestowed on us to carry this flag high. The ideals enshrined in the Trust Deed that was bestowed on the Brahma Samaj are as follows:

- The prayer hall will be dedicated to the public worship of the 'Author and Preserver of the Universe', and the purpose of the Trust Deed is to create a public space for the worship of One Supreme Being, emphasising the practice of monotheism, promoting unity of mankind, as well as encouraging ethical and non-idolatrous practices.
- The aim is to foster love, piety and morality.
- The Deed also explicitly excludes the worship of idols, images or pictures during the prayers and bans sacrificing of animals.

- It does not permit denigration of any other faith during the course of the prayer meetings.
- The place is an inclusive one that puts no bar on the entry of anyone based on religion, caste, creed or gender.

The Brahma Samaj played a very significant role in uniting the countrymen at a time when the people were divided along caste and religion lines. The country was at its lowest ebb, troubled by rifts, social conflicts, exploitations and wide-spread ignorance. Today our nation is again fractured along religious identities and there is much intolerance. It is again time to revive the ideals with greater zeal and pave the way to a better and happier future.

In this issue, we begin with the first instalment of Shri Rajiv Gangopadhyay's article 'Advaita Vedanta Philosophy: Shankaracharya and Rammohun' that aims to explain the core of the Advaita – Vedanta Philosophy, as taught by Shanakaracharya, in the context of Raja Rammohun Roy's interpretation of the same. We continue with the article 'The Birdman of Bengal – Ajoy Home', which is a reminiscence of her daughter Smt. Sutapa Roychoudhuri.

ADVAITA–VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY: SHANKARACHARYA AND RAMMOHUN (Part – 1)

Rajib Gangopadhyay

Vedic philosophical thought in India started to wane around the sixth century BCE. The socio-religious dominance and ritualistic rigidity of Brahminism had, by this period, generated widespread intellectual and moral dissatisfaction. In response, a profound spiritual and philosophical awakening took place across the subcontinent, seeking liberation from the constraints of Brahminical orthodoxy. Various doctrines and many new religions emerged, among which Buddhism, articulated by Gautam Buddha, and Jainism, propagated by Mahavir, were of paramount significance. Under the aegis of royal patronage, these two faiths flourished and profoundly influenced Indian thought and society, leading to a significant decline in orthodox Hinduism. The ascendancy of Buddhism, in particular, extended over vast region of the subcontinent, marking a decisive shift from Vedic ritualism to introspective spiritual practice and ethical universalism. Yet, over time, with the advent of the Bhakti movement and the mystical flows of Sufism, the philosophical and social influence of Buddhism and Jainism gradually ebbed

paving the way for the resurgence of Hindu traditions.

Within the Brahminical scholarly tradition, the name that is most highly regarded after the Vedic sages is that of Mahamati Adi Shankaracharya. He was born in the late eighth or early ninth century to a conservative Nambudiri Brahmin family in the region of Malabar (Kerala) – one of the principal strongholds of Brahminical orthodoxy. He renounced worldly life at a very early age to embrace the monastic life. Through his extensive commentarial work and profound philosophical insight, he consolidated and reinvigorated the Advaita (non-dualist) school of Vedanta, asserting it as the most authoritative interpretation of the Vedic revelation. His intellectual labours led to a nationwide revival of Advaita philosophy, establishing it as a central and enduring aspect in Hindu philosophical discourse. One must recognize that, although certain protagonists of idol worship later hailed Shankar as the earthly manifestation of “Shiva”– identifying him with the “Shankaravatar” and associating his legacy with the development of “Shaivism”; his own philosophical vision admitted no place for such ritualistic

paganism. The core of his “Advaita–Vedanta” lies in the contention that “Brohmo” or “Adisatta” (the Primordial Being) is the sole, absolute reality – One without a second. Shankar’s reinterpretation of the Upanishad sutra concerning the apparent plurality of Brohmo gave rise to what may be termed as “Mayanism”, or the “doctrine of illusion”. He considered Brohmo to be one and unique, and claimed that this world, which is referred to as the several manifestations of Brohmo, is utterly incorrect; we see Brohmo in many forms as a result of Maya’s deceit. Hence, Shankar formulated the central dictum of Advaita – Vedanta: “Brohmo should be recognised as truth and the world abandoned as false”. Shankar developed the Advaita – Vedanta philosophy, which states that the word “Tattomasi” (*Tat + Tvam + Asi*) of Upanishad proves the non-difference. To prove this, he used the words “Tat” and “Tvam” with its *gouna–arth* [when the significance of a sentence cannot be determined by taking the main meaning (*mukkya–arth*) of a word, then a secondary meaning is taken from one of the qualities of the main meaning]. “Tat” means omniscience, omnipotence and “Tvam” means limited knowledge, limited power. By abandoning the *mukkya–arth*, Shankar used the word “Tat” to mean the consciousness of

Brohmo, and “Tvam” to mean the consciousness of the living entity (*gouna–arth*). Thus, the omniscience and a little knowledge, omnipotence and a little power are opposites, but in respect to consciousness, “Tat” and “Tvam” are identical.

Various philosophical traditions within Indian thought – particularly the Bhakti traditions, emerged as sustained critiques of Shankar’s Advaita – Vedanta particularly its conception of the phenomenal world as “Maya” (illusion). Among these critics, Ramanuja’s philosophy of “Visistadvaita” (qualified non-dualism) occupies a foremost position. In Visistadvaita philosophy, Brohmo is conceived as the ultimate reality qualified by an infinite auspicious attribute (*kalyaṇ-guṇ*). The “Atma” (individual self) and the “Jagat” (world) are both real and both are dependent on Brohmo. In Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita: Adileela (Chapter Seven–verses 108 to 110), Shankar’s interpretation of the impersonal and abstract form of Brohmo is sharply renounced in the following words: “*Upanishad-sahit sutra kohe jei tatwa || mukkhya-britti sei tatwa – param mahatwa || gouna-britye jeba bhashya korilo Acharya | taha shrobone nash hoy sarba karya || tanhar nahiko dosh ishwaragna paiya | gouna arth korilo*

mukhya arth acchadiya ll”. The verse suggests that *Vedanta Sutras* should be interpreted in consonance with the *Upanishadic* evidence; for only through the *mukhya-britti* (the primary mode of signification) the ultimate principle be apprehended. When this primary sense is maintained, the doctrine attains its “*param mahatwa*” – its highest and most authentic meaning. However, Acharya Shankar acting under divine mandate from Shri Krishna, composed his commentary by adopting the *gouna-britti* – the secondary or derivative sense, drawn from a mere attribute of the primary meaning. In doing so, he deliberately concealed the explicit truth of the personal God (*Ishwar tatwa*) beneath the non-dualistic framework of *Mayanism*.

From this Gaudiya perspective, Shankar's famous dictum – *Brahma satya jagat mithya* (Brohmo is true and the world is false) is a fatal admonition in the history of ancient Indian civilization. For at least a thousand years, the erudite Indians held the belief that the world is an “illusion”. Our lifestyles, beliefs, social background, politics, philosophy all have changed, still from generation after generation we carry along the cliché “*Jagat Mithya*” (Maya's deceit), as the fundamental teaching of Hinduism.

It has often confused the scholars that how an enlightened, sagacious and

pious Adi Shankaracharya – a spiritual reformer of rare brilliance, could propound a doctrine as “*Mayanism*”? What is the key mantra that steered him to believe that the “world is false”? The forty-fourth chapter of the “*Shuklayajurved Samhita*” is known as the “*Ishapanishad*”. This brief Upanishad, comprising only eighteen mantras, holds a distinctive position within Vedic literature owing to its exceptional philosophical and spiritual significance. The first mantra of *Ishapanishad* is

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

“*Isavasyamidam sarvam yatkinca jagatyam jagat | tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma gridhah kasyasviddhanam*ll” In this mantra, we find *Isha* = *Paramatma/ Parameshwar/ Ishwar* (God). *Basyamidam* = *Basyam* + *Idam*, where *Basyam* in one sense refers to covering or clothing and in another sense is suitable or worthy of living. *Idam* = this; *Sarvam* = everything; *Yatkinca* = anything; *Jagatyam* = the dynamic creation of world; *Jagat* = ever-changing world; *Tena* = by him; *Tyaktena* = things given up by Brohmo or Adisatta in one sense, by renunciation in another. *Bhunjitha* = you will appreciate them only. *Ma gridhah* = do not greed on, and *kasyasviddhanam* = the money that belongs to someone else. Shankar's

interpretation to the word '*Basyam*' as “covering” and explained the first part of this mantra as “This world is covered by the illusion of Brohmo” (in *gouna arth*). In the second part, he took the word “renunciation” to mean “*Tyaktena*” (in *gouna arth*) and emphasised how one should nourish the soul via renunciation. He urged, “If the world is an illusory manifestation of Brohmo, then renounce it as false and abide by your own self.” Once you reject everything as false, it is no longer right to have any lust for that “untrue”. In other sense (in *mukkhya arth*) of the word “*Basyam*”, Brohmo does not cover the world; rather, he is present in it by judging every item in it to be habitable. Again if we consider the *mukkhya arth* of the word “*Tyaktena*” that is to accept what Brohmo or Adisatta gives in sacrifice; the mantra means to appreciate what He gives to us rather than covet other people's money. Furthermore, the second mantra of the Ishapanishad brings the world back in reality. कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतुं समाः । एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥ “*Kurvannaeva karmani jijivisechhatam samah* ॥” i.e. People in this world aspire to live for a hundred years while continually engaging in “*karma*” (righteous action). The implication, however, transcends the literal desire for longevity. It emphasizes that the true fulfilment of human life lies not in passive existence but in conscious and

ethical participation in the world through one's duties and works. “*evam tvayi nanyathetosti*” i.e. there is no other way for you than this. (This indicates that the path of active and selfless work is the only way and there is no other path to a meaningful life to live in the world) while the central message is “*na karma lipayate nare* ॥” i.e. when one performs in self-less or desire less action, (an action performed without any expectation of fruits or results), those actions do not bind the person to its cause and effect and its consequences. This is the central tenet of the “*Karmayoga*” path to liberation. This verse indicates that karma is the cause of bondage. When deed is performed with a selfless and detached attitude (*Nishkam Karma*), it does not create such bondage. In this way, a person continues to advance on the path to *Moksha* (liberation) even while performing actions.

Dr. Mani Bhowmik, the world-renowned scientist, in his work “*Brahmo Satya, Jagat Satya*” elucidates that the renunciation (*tyag*) spoken of in the first mantra of the Ishapanishad does not imply the abandonment of karma or the negation of the world. Rather, it signifies the renunciation of attachment – a spiritual detachment that enables one to partake of the world without sorrow, thereby experiencing the bliss of divine existence even amidst action. Shankar rejected the phenomenal world as *Maya*

and embraced the austere path of asceticism. Yet the question remains, how deeply did he himself subscribe to the dictum “Brohmo is true, the world is false”? Did he truly disdain the world, refusing to acknowledge its beauty, vitality, and sensuous charm? Or did he, reinterpret the Upanishads in a manner shaped by his own metaphysical vision? For, paradoxically, while proclaiming the unreality of the world, Shankar did not retreat from it. Throughout his brief but momentous life, he journeyed across the length and breadth of India, engaging in philosophical debates, reforming religious institutions, and revitalizing the spiritual consciousness of his age. He founded four Maṭhas or monasteries (Dwaraka Sarada Pith in the west, Puri Sri Govardhan Pith in the east, Sringeri Sri Sharada Pith in the south and Badri Jyotishpith in the north) and organized the “Dashnami Sect”, the monastic order that unified ascetics across the

subcontinent. Having accomplished this monumental work of spiritual consolidation, he ultimately withdrew from the world of Maya, departing from his embodied existence at a remarkably early age.

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[Author: Shri Rajiv Gangopadhyay is the Editor of Tattwakoumudi.]

The Birdman of Bengal – Ajoy Home

(Part – 2)

Sutapa Roychoudhuri

Rabindranath Tagore was the prime force in Ajoy's knowledge, work and delight. He was devoted to Tagore's rich and diverse information. Due to this reason he corrected the final proofs which were being published by Shri Pulin Behari Sen. And, if there was any mistake in the information, he would correct it.

In 1960, before Tagore's birth centenary celebrations (1961), the bundle of proofs of Tagore's writings would arrive at our home. My father used to make me read these aloud, so that the punctuations could be properly inserted.

Due to his extra-ordinary memory, he knew all of Tagore's songs, poetry, stories and articles by heart and never needed to consult the books. He submitted the final proof of Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay's 'Rabindra Jeeban Pratibha' (a biography of Tagore). The proofs of 'Bharat Kosha' of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad were also corrected by him.

Ajoy had a special liking for literature – be they in Bengali, English or the translations from any foreign languages. His collection of books was large. In anyone asked him about his library, he would say 'I couldn't have known about

all these without Malotidi's help." Malotidi was the eldest daughter of H.Basu, and a famous 'toppa' singer in her days, known widely by her name Maloti Ghosal.

He learnt many languages while studying literature. He learnt French, Russian, and some Chinese besides English.

His handwriting was beautiful. At the beginning of every academic year he would cover my books and exercise copies with brown paper, using a very special technique called Jack-covering that needed no cut but simple folding. He would then cut out the labels, write down my name, class etc and paste them on the covered books and copies. My friends admired my beautifully covered books and exercise books. I gradually picked up the art from my father.

He was meticulous about maintaining time. He was never late in arriving at his destination. During holidays we would watch the films shown at the 'Science Fiction Cine Club.' There the show started at 10.30 am. But we were already in our seats by 10.15 am or 10.20 am at the most.

My father was very friendly with me. He always maintained a cordial relation with

my friends. Meshomoshai or Kakababu, as they called him, was always beside them.

He himself had many friends who were much younger to him. During the days when the city closed down due to a 'General Strike' he would descend on the street with cricket bat to play with the local boys. He maintained his camaraderie with them, joining in their games even after he crossed sixty years of age. They played badminton in winter.

There was an open terrace on the south-eastern part of the residence of Ajoy. From this open space one could see far. There were no high-rises then to block the view. He would stroll on the veranda and enjoy the breeze calling it 'the God-given air' (ভগবানের দেওয়া হাওয়া), especially when there was a storm blowing.

He was fond of gardening. Rows of pots holding various plants like roses, bougainvillea lines the terrace. He would mix the potting soil, fertilise it and tend his plants with great care. He seemed to have struck a friendship with trees just as he had become attached to birds and animals.

The boys and girls from neighbouring house-holds would flock to him, sharing their chats and discussing on various topics to which he had the answer. He managed his time well to carry on his own studies and outings. He managed to attend the Bridge Association of Bengal and tour cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Nagpur, Kanpur or South India that helped him to pen down a book on the game of Bridge entitled "Home's Three Stages Convention".

(To be continued)

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

Brahmo Samaj

7th Poush Celebration

On 7th Poush 1432, 23rd December 2025, Tuesday at 10.30 am the auspicious day of 7th Poush was celebrated at the Maharshi Bhavan, Jorasanko. Divine service was conducted by Smt. Sujata Banerjee and hymns were rendered by Smt. Jayati Acharjya, Smt. Manisha Singha, Smt. Bipasha Maiti, Smt. Bishakha Sonali De, Smt. Anumita Sengupta, Sri Rajnath Das Sri Aban Saha and Sri Jatishankar Banerjee.

A fair titled the "7th Poush Mela" was organised at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Premises from 22nd to 24th December 2025. Various stalls were set up to sell a wide range of products including handicrafts, food items, garments, books, and more. Cultural programs were organized each evening at the fairground.

Matrimonial

Groom (preferably Brahmo) required for Kolkata based Brahmo girl, B.Tech., aged 28 years. At present working in Cognizant Technology Solutions Kolkata. Contact person: Ajoy Kumar Halder Ph. No. 9062680810

Acknowledgement
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We are updating our member records and intend to include verified email IDs and mobile numbers for each member to facilitate faster and more frequent communication.

Many members have already submitted the updated forms. Those who have not received the form or have been unable to submit it, are requested to kindly update the details below and send us the completed form through any of the following methods:

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We look forward for your continuing co-operation and support.

Yours truly,

Secretary

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