# The Indian Messenger

ORGAN OF THE SADHARAN BRHAMO SAMAJ

Mainly Devoted to Religious, Social, Moral and Educational Topics

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# **INVOCATION**

If thou wouldst estimate thyself put away wealth, land, honours, scrutinize thyself within

- Seneca

\* \* \* \* \*

Two men please God – who serves Him with all his heart because he knows Him : who seeks Him with all his heart because he Knows Him not.

- Panin

\* \* \* \* \*

Live in the world like an ant. The world is a mixture of truth and untruth - sugar and sand Become an ant and pick out the sugar, the truth.

- Ramkrishna

\* \* \* \* \*

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## Editorial

We have just observed the 184th Bhadrotsava in the same manner as we do every year according to a programme drawn up for that purpose. We joined in the divine service listened to the discourses enjoyed the hymns sung and met fellow believers Those entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the observance were happy that the programme went off without any hitch. But let us ask ourselves did we feel a flow of spirit, an upliftment of our souls from the functions we participated in. If we did then all is well but if we did not then it must be concluded that we have lost sight of the great significance of 6th Bhadra and the Utsava was a mere observance of a convention, a mere ritual.

Due to worldly absorptions and spiritual apathy the significance of this great day is lost on us. This was the day in the year 1828 on which Rammohun's glorious vision of the union of mankind found expression in the formation of the Brahmo Samaj where any person of any nationality, cast, creed, colour or belief could join in prayer to the Universal Father and become a part of the universal brotherhood. Rammohun called to all - 'Think of the One, who pervades the earth, the ocean and the sky, think of the Supreme Being who knows all but remains inscrutable because He is infinite'. His aim was also to liberate the people from the oppression of the priest class of all religions.

Rammohun strived to bring man nearer to his Maker and his life and teachings discouraged all efforts to attribute divinity to him as the founder of a new religion. His following might have swelled had he allowed this.

But mere recounting of history and the achievements of Rammohun and the other leaders of the Brahmo Samaj who followed him is not enough. The Samaj has a glorious past but we must find out how much of the thoughts have we been able to follow. How much or how little of Rammohun's glorious vision and ideas have we understood and acted upon. That will determine the success or failure of the Utsav that we have observed.

#### **Undaunted Rammohun**

#### Dr. Saroj Mohan Mitra

But here we find that Rammohun had complete knowledge of India's system, her revenue system and the judicial system. He was aware of want miner details and the interacts ways that they worked.

In Bengal and Bihar the Zamindari system was in force while the Madras Presidency functioned under the Raytwari system. The Zamindari system introduced during the Moghul rule continued under British Rule. In the Zamindari system the revenue was collected through intermediate agents while in the Rayath system it was the government responsibility to deposit revenue due.

The zemenders were the agents through whom revenue was collected. In this arrangement was a land for the farmers because of which many of their rights were lost. He wrote that in the older days those the titler had complete right on the land he tilled . But in latter days the new laws of the rules he loet his rights. In olden India land was the right of the owner on his land was absolute. Considered as private property but under the Muslim Rules this right was curtailed and when the British came they followed the same principle.

Here Rammohun ruled against his own class, the Zamindars. The farmers were humiliated and oppressed by the Zamindars and the revenue collectors. He wrote that under both the Rayathyari system and the Zamindari system the farmers were in misery, and lived their life on the mercy of the land owner. The Zamindars carried out their oppression with full support from the Government and after the farmers part of the produce was sold out to meet the demands of the land owner. Under the permanent settlement system the Zamindar and the government had benefited the needs of the farmer and his family was not even taken into consideration. Rammohun was deeply concerned and saddened at the plight of the farmers and constantly railed the Zamindars for their neglect of their duty towards the farmers were the real owners of the land. He insisted that the revenue system should be revamped and advised that the magistrate or Judge should inspect the district under him at least once a year to ensure that the laws enacted for the farmers protection were fully implemented.

## The Brahmo Samaj and National Integration

Amiya Kr Sen

Fellow workers,

Permit me to offer you my heartfelt thanks for requesting me to participate in the discussion on a problem which is of supreme importance at the present stage of the development of the country.

We have become independant, but the independence is not enough. It is only a means to an end. We have to create a society based on justice and equity.

This is not possible unless the people of the country feel that they form one single undivided nation.

National integration is absolutely necessary for achieving our goal of social and economic progress.

This problem of national integration receives added importance when signs are not wanting of fissiparous tendencies among our people, very often leading to deplorable consequences. History is full of examples of nations which came to a disastrous end because the different elements constituting them could not be integrated into one composite whole, and the story of enmities and rivalries among different sections of the one slave race in the Balkans should warn us against what might well happen to India if we are not alert now.

Fortunately India, from the remotest period of its history, had always a basic unity and a peculiar and distinctive identity of its own. There has always been a sort of synthesis of the cultures of the different types of people inhabiting the country. During early periods of its history, invaders like Sakas, Huns, Bactrian Greek came but very soon their cultures were absorbed in the composite culture gradually developing in the country. Manners, customs, religions and icons belonging to different races and tribes including the original inhabitants of the country – all formed parts of a synthetic whole and the tribes themselves formed indistinguishable sections of the great Indian community. Although Muslims brought with them a distinct culture which was very difficult to assimilate, yet constant residence in the same country brought about fruitful exchange of ideas in art, in mysticism, and even in social manners and customs. The great reformers of the Islamic period of Indian history were influenced by this assimilation which went on unperceived in the society. When the country came under the domination of a western nation, its democratic outlook, its ideas of social equality and justice were not without their influence on the new thought-world which was being gradually formed during the Indian renaissance.

During this period separatist tendencies were, however, being gradually developed under the impact of power politics especially among the newly created middle classes. Leagues and Associations were formed which accentuated differences by laying special, and, very often, undue stress on the rights and privileges of the particular sections of communities. Such tendencies were encouraged by foreign rulers for obvious reasons and led to riots etc. and finally to the division of India to Bharat and Pakistan. Unfortunately for us, even after independence, these fissiparous tendencies are not absent among us. They are manifested in various fields of thought and action. Regionalism, casteism and linguism, have led to results which cannot but attract the notice of thoughtful men.

In olden times India was politically divided into many kingdoms, principalities and regions. Difficulties of communication, racial and other differences – all contributed to the development of distinct types of socio religious traditions in different regions. People grew up in this social environment, imbibed the traditions and ideas floating around them and something like a regional thoughtworld was created. In the earlier ages of our history, in spite of occasional contacts with different regions through pilgrimage etc, there was inadequate exchange of ideas among people belonging to these regions. This continued even up to the Muslim period of Indian history. Later on facilities of communications and impact of liberal ideas of the West brought people nearer but traditional differences were much too strong to be obliterated. The economic factor also played its part. Unemployment among the people led to the enunciation of principles of domicile which accentuated emotional disintegration. After the advent of independence, when the economic regeneration of the country engaged the attention of people, disparities and inequality of economic growth in the different states become responsible for inter state rivalry and consequent strengthening of the regional outlook.

The cast system is the result of various complex forces-foreign tribes and original inhabitants assimilated into Indian society, occupational sections combined into socio economic units, the old superstructure of the Aryan society, - all contributed their share to its development. In the earlier ages of our history each caste might have its panchayet system to regulate its life., but the social structure being based on a status there was little of that rivalry among castes as found at present. In modern times, the development of industries, democratic ideals of life and gradual evolution of a society based not on status but on economic factors have changed the situation. Yearning for higher status and economic position, the psychology of fear and a sense of urgent need of self protection, resentment against social justice - all strengthened separatist tendencies. The situation is such that even the Congress, the strongest political party of India, has to take into consideration the predominance of particular castes in constituencies when it chooses candidates for election. Insatiable greed, the craze for self glorification and the exploitation of caste sentiments by the avaricious and the unscrupulous, have created a situation which might lead to social disintegration unless the leaders are alert.

Language is the vehicles for ideals and aspiration of a community and, as such exerts great influence on the people of a particular region. During the Moslem period regional languages in India were developed by the preaching of saints and reformers. With the development of literature, during the period of British rule in India when there was an intellectual ferment in different regions of country, people gradually became attached to the regional languages. the nationalistic revolt against foreign rule, renewed interest in the past and glorification, sometimes unreasonable, of customs and traditions prevalent in the country led to changed outlook which strengthened people's attachment to their own language – a fact which has been recognized even by the framers of our constitution. The agitation for linguistic units as states has also contributed its share to the

strengthening of this tendency. During the period of British supremacy, English, the only language of intercommunication among the different regions of the country acted as an integrating force by bringing the leaders of thought into the national organization liker Congress and the Science Congress. It was however felt hat the ideals and aspirations of people are better expressed in their own language.

Integration in the field of language was sought to be achieved by the adoption of Hindi as the instrument of communication among the different states. The over anxiety of the supporters of Hindi to make it the national language of India led to serious repercussion throughout the country and strengthened the tendency towards making the regional languages rival to Hindi. This over emphasis on regional languages has led to serious consequences like language riots in some states and, if carried to its logical extreme, will make interstate communication difficult, if not impossible. Integration can be achieved only by inter communication of ideas among the people of different regions, and the absence of such inter communication will lead to undesirable results. The strong reaction among the mind of the people of southern and even eastern India make it very difficult for Hindi to become the national language of India; and if English, which has so long served as language of intercommunication, be permanently discarded it will lead not only to deterioration in the standard of education but also will make India insular in its outlook by shutting out all movements for new ideas in the other parts of the world. This is a situation which needs careful consideration from leaders of thought in the country.

It is needless to refer to the communal dissention which led to the partition of India and the lamentable results of that partition. This has been due entirely to our failure to recognize that essentially religion is one, namely , worship of the supreme being, and that it has taken its colouring from the environment in the midst of which it is developed. It is a remarkable fact that for centuries different communities had been living side by side in amity and it was the ambition and greed of the middle classes of each community which led to the intensification of communal hatred and communal passion. Of late, there has been discernable disruptive forces based on wrong ideas of the rights and privileges of communities; and they have been encouraged by a tendency among the political leaders to placate communal leaders for gaining short lived advantages in the world of politics.

This being the situation in the country, national integration becomes imperative. We have to solve this problem; we must try to get as much light as possible from attempts by other nations to achieve national integration.

The United States of America has had to face this problem for almost the entire period of its history. People belonging to many countries and many nations migrate to America. For sometimes they form groups; but they have to learn the English language and get accustomed to the American way of life. Inter marriage among the different groups' leads to biological assimilation and the common background of socio economic ideals brings about a cultural integration which has stood even the shocks of war. The situation in India is more complex. The groups are grown too far apart for intermarriages and the common background of socioreligious ideals are breaking up under the stress of economic forces. The American way of national integration is consequently very difficult to adopt in India.

The USSR has sought to achieve national integration in a way altogether different. There is cultural autonomy through out its territories. Each national group not only retains its own traditions, literature, and customs but is also encouraged to develop the same. The integrated force that works in its vast domains is a strict conformity to communistic ideals in all matter, political, economic and social. In India, where the widest freedom of thought and expression is allowed and no distinctive philosophy of life is imposed on people, the integrated force of a common imposed ideology is absent, and consequently national integration is more difficult of attainment. It is also debatable whether regimentation of the human mind as envisaged in the USSR programme is conductive to progress.

In India, after independence rivalries among different states regarding schemes for economic development,, disputes about shares of expenses and benefits derived from the common projects, and last but not the least, forcible imposition of languages on minorities led to an explosive situation which called for remedial measures. A chief ministers' conference was held and a committee was formed for recommending measures for attainment of emotional integration. The importance of the problem was thus recognized. Emphasis was laid on "the composite structure of Indian culture and the need to preserve unity in diversity by cherishing and respecting equally the various cultural strands which enrich the Indian civilization.

The importance of education in fostering national unity could not be minimized. "Education properly oriented can prove to be the greatest cohesive force in the country" it was further admitted that linguistic minorities are entitled to get instruction in their mother tongue at the primary stage of their education and that the effective steps should be taken to implement this principle not only in the letter, but also in spirit. Recommendations have, accordingly been made with regard to the medium of instruction. Primary education in the mother tongue; secondary and university education in the regional languages or in the mother tongue of the minorities under certain conditions ; Hindi or English as the medium of instruction in selected secondary schools ; the study of Hindi for " strengthening the link of inter state communication and of English not only as an important language but as the medium of communication with the world and a source of enrichment for all our languages" – these form the highlights of the interim report submitted by the committee as far as the problem of language is concerned.

#### - Presented at the All India Session of the Brahmo conference in Bombay, 1962

[To be continued in the next issue...]

## **ONE GOD AND FATHER**

Andre Bouvier

[ Continued from last issue...]

#### III. God in All

To make love the inspiring fire of our service, a continuous work, not a momentous and sporadic outburst of sentimental charity we have to practice the spirit of sacrifice. And sacrifice is the common bond of all religions. As Christians we still believe, with Soederblom, that Christ is not the sole, but the Unique; the historical Reavealer and the mystery of the Cross remain the highest expressions of human sacrifice and divine love. Otto has shown that the unicity of Christianity lies in the reconciliation with God. Troeltsch has insisted upon personal conviction, Heiler upon the sense of the Holy, and Tillich upon the princip of the unconditional, the mystical a priori. If I propose uniting the general Revelation of which all religions are holders, and the special Revelation of Christianity, the spirit of sacrifice, it is not as a theory, for we are not here to elaborate theorems, but as a common ground of faith and a practical toil for service. Roughly speaking, we see in the idea of sacrifice both the total devotion to God (Mysticism) and the total devotion to man (the ethical religions), and we hail the supremest truth in that spirit of sacrifice which claims that love is the highest form of true religion.

Brethren, will we be generous, liberal end faithful enough to acknowledge both the high value of Indian mysticism, which enables us in our Occidental consecration, to grasp the treasures of inward divine power in man Such is the meaning of God in all. That means within the depth of our hearts, not syncretism, which is treachery towards our own beliefs, not even the search of a common denominator, but, through love, the spiritual agreement of a common ideal ground, which I think, allows our meeting, our communion in the spirit, and our common Work fulfil the purpose of this conference, namely, sacrifice. This attitude, to me the deepest of the believer, for it is both total dedication and obedience to the God universal, includes also the sacrificium intellectus, the sacrifice of our ideas, our doctrines, our formulas .... This should be easy for liberal believers, who know that truth outgrows and transcends every formulation. Sacrifice unites man with God, sacrifice unites man with men, Above justice, which we must pursue, but of which we know that it never will be ripened to perfection on this earth, sacrifice through love breaks the infernal circle of egoism misunderstanding and hate. Here is the place to listen to the sublime prayer

attributed to Saint Francis:

O Lord, help me to seek

not so much to be consoled than to comfort, not so much to be understood than to understand, not so much to be loved than to love, for it is in giving that one receives, it is in dying that I one is born again to eternal life.

We are still more happy to meet Prof. Th. Siegfried, of Marburg, one of our great European liberal leaders, when he says that the dialogue between the highest creeds is only possible through most serious insight in the religion of the other mutual frankness and reciprocal respect, attitudes which are also created by the spirit of sacrifice. Otto has demonstrated that, on the field of comparative religion, we cannot reach an absolute; but this does not exclude conviction And here Siegfried joins, in speaking of a personal Absolute by which the true believer feels bound. If we think that spirit of sacrifice is the highest expression of religion whatsoever, we are ready to be obedient, together to the mutual call, because the spirit of sacrifice is also humility.

Brethren, at the beginning of this momentous session, which shall demonstrate that, united through faith, we will serve united, let us say with Van Der Leeuw.

Before God everything must be eternal,

Let us repeat with Goethe:

Whosoever who wants the Highest, must will the Whole.

Let us remember that there is a parable of the Prodigal Son both in the Lotus-Sutra and in the Gospel of St. Luke, the first, seven hundred years after the death of Buddha, We will hear also that the infinite is the Unknown, the Ineffable whom no words can enclose, as in the Japanese Buddhistic Zenreligion:

How could we seize the glimner of the moon in

the dancing water?

We know that in 1578, for the first parliament of religions, the emperoer of India, the Mughol Akbar, had erected the magnificent Tarda-Khana, or House of Discussion, one of the participants proclaimed:

"If you are Muslim, go and live with the Franks; if you are Brahmin, go with the schismatics; if you are Christian, become fellow of the Jews. Whatever be thy religion, make friendship with those who think unlike thyself. If you can join them deliberately, if you can hear then discuss without being irritated, thou hast reached liberty."

And let us receive anew this supreme and lapidar definition of Yahwe the One who is: I am the One who is:

God the Father of all, who is over all, among all and with all.

- Address delivered at the I.A.R.F. Congress at Chicago

## Matrimonial

A Brahmo young man (age 35), M.Sc., well established in life, working in a private company, coming from an academic family of Bidhan Nagar (Salt Lake city) wants a Bengali life partner (preferably working, age: 28 to 34 years). Interested person may contact through mobile: +919433485557 or email:ranjitbilas@gmail.com

# **Rajnarain Bose (1826 – 1899)**

The month of September, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of which Rajnarain Bose was born and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of which he departed this life, brings home to us, a midst other sacred memories, also the memory of this historic personality and sage of the Brahmo Samaj, whose father Nandakishore Bose was an ardent disciple of Raja Rammohun Roy. After a five years' course at the Hindu College under able teachers and amidst notable class-mates like Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Peary Churn Sircar, Jnanendra Mohun Tagore, Bhudeb Mukhopadhayay and others, Raj Narain grew up to be an erudite scholar. In 1846, he was drawn to the Brahmo Samaj movement which was then being nurtured and propagated by Devendra Nath Tagore and took up the English translation of the Upanishads at the instance of the latter. From 1848 to 1850, we find Raj Narain and Akshay Kumar Dutta, as a result of their discussions and controversies with that prince of Christian missionaries, Dr. Alexander Duff, discarding the hitherto prevalent non-fallibility of the Vedas as the basis of Brahmosim and accepting that of one's self-intuition. They won over their elder Devendranath to their point of view and this marks a turning point in the history of the Brahmo Samaj. The best of the life of this devoted sage and scholar was spent at Midnapur as the Headmaster of the Zilla School there from 1851-1866 and he effected all round improvement there, not only in his own school but also in the fields of female education, temperance, religion and nationalism by founding a Girls' School resuscitating the life of the moribund Brahmo Samaj and by starting a Temperance Society and a Society for the propagation of national feeling there. His learned and inspiring sermons delivered from the pulpit of the Midnapur Brahmo Samaj created profound impression all over Bengal and it is a memorable fact that Brahmonanda Keshub Chunder Sen, in his youth, first felt attracted to the Brahmo Samaj by reading his sermons. He followed up his professions with practices and, in 1864 or 1865, he gave his eldest daughter in marriage according to Brahmo rites, to Dr. K.D. Ghose of which wedlock Sri Aurobindo was born. After retirement in 1866 on broken health, Rajnarain lived an active life at Calcutta till 1879 by writing treatises on religion, old memoirs and delivering impressive speeches by being a close

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associate of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore. Continued ill-health took this sage and seer to Baidyanath where he lived to the end of his days as the life and soul of the Brahmo Samaj there, earning universal esteem and regards. Even the orthodox pandas of the Baidyanath temple regarded him as the second Baidyanath. Such godliness comes to one who not only professes the worship of the Inflinite but follows his professions with practice. May our respect embolden our wavering spirit dancing to the tune of mock popularity.

J.K.B

# NOTICE

#### SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ Annual General Meeting to be held on 27/01/2013 Sunday at 6 P.M. Venue: Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Prayer Hall

#### **AGENDA**

- 1. President's speech under Rule 14.
- 2. Annual Report of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2011-2012
- 3. Audited Accounts of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2011-2012 (March, 2012)
- 4. Declaration of the results of the Election of the office bearers of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2012-2013
- Declaration of the results of the Election of the members of the General Committee of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2012-2013 (Kolkata & Mofussil)
- 6. Greetings
- 7. Appointment of Auditor for 2012-2013
- 8. Miscellaneous.

Members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj are requested to attend.

Date: 20.09.2012 211, Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata - 700006 Premomoy Das Secretary Sadharan Brahmo Samaj

# NOTICE

#### SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

# General Committee Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly general committee meeting of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2011-2012 will be held on Saturday 01/12/2012 at 5 PM in the prayer hall of the Samaj.

All general committee members are requested to attend.

Agenda:

- 1. Confirmation of proceedings
- 2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly report
- 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly accounts
- 4. Miscellaneous

# NOTICE

### SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

# General Committee Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter

The  $4^{\text{th}}$  Quarterly general committee meeting of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2011-2012 will be held on Saturday 01/12/2012 at 5.30 PM in the prayer hall of the Samaj.

All general committee members are requested to attend.

Agenda:

- 5. Confirmation of proceedings
- 6. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report
- 7. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly accounts
- 8. Miscellaneous

# NOTICE

#### SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ Annual Election of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj: 2012 - 2013

#### (A) Election of Office-bearers:

Nominations are invited for the under mentioned posts of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2012-2013 from amongst the valid members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The name for each post shall be duly proposed and seconded in writing by two valid members with their full addresses and with written consent from the candidate with his address. Eligible candidate must be at least 25 years of age and must posses the qualification of membership under rule 6 (Kha). Office-bearers shall be resident of Kolkata or its neighborhood. All nominations must reach the Samaj Office within 5 p.m. on or before 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2012. Names of valid candidates after scrutiny will be put up on the Samaj Notice Board on 01.12.2012 after 5 p.m. The last date for withdrawal of candidature will be 08.12.2012 by 5 p.m. after which date no withdrawal will be admissible.

#### Post of Office-bearers

1. President	 One
2. Secretary	 One
3. Assistant Secretaries	 Not more than three
4. Treasurer	 One

#### (B) Election of Members of General Committee for 2012-2013:

Members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj willing to stand as candidate for election to the General Committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for 2012-2013 are requested to send their full names and addresses to the undersigned on or before 24.11.2012 within 5 p.m. at the Samaj Office. Candidates must be members of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for at least three years, must have completed 25 years of age and possess the qualifications of members under rule 6 (Kha) under rule 20 read with Bye-law 2 as amended on 06.12.1969. Kolkata members should be residents of Kolkata postal zone and Howrah town. Names of valid candidates after scrutiny will be put up on the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Notice Board on 01.12.2012 after 5 p.m. The last date for withdrawal of candidates will be 08.12.2012 by 5 p.m. after which date no withdrawal will be admissible.

20.08.2012 211, Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata - 700006 Premomoy Das Secretary Sadharan Brahmo Samaj

## Acknowledgement For the month of August 2012

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DN/a-661	Sm. Rita Biswas	On the occasion of 6 <sup>th</sup> death anniversary of her husband Late Adhip Kumar Biswas	Balya Bhavan Fund	1,000/-
GL-670	Sm. Sunanda Chatterjee		General Fund	500/-
GL-685	Sm. Rita Biswas		General Fund	500/-
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