

## Reading Emerson and Tagore in the Age of Religious Intolerance

Sardar M. Anwaruddin<sup>1</sup>  
University of Toronto, Canada

### Abstract

The greatest problems of the world result from people of different cultures, races and religions being unable to get along and to work together to solve problems such as racism, religious extremism, terrorism and ethnic conflicts. These problems have implicated our contemporary time, especially the post-9/11 era, with anxiety, fear, and suspicion. In this crucial phase of human history, we need what Martha Nussbaum calls an “imaginative capacity” to see how the world looks from the point of view of a person who has a different religion. In this article, I discuss the religious thoughts of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Although they lived in different cultures and belonged to different literary periods, their intellectual correspondence shows how both of them transcended contemporary religious traditions and established an original relationship with the Supreme Being. It is my hope that this comparative analysis, thus far unexplored, will provide us with insights into understanding religion with an “imaginative capacity” at a time when religious intolerance is disrupting peace across the globe.

### Keywords

Emerson, Tagore, religion, culture, God, transcendentalism

### Introduction

Intellectual correspondence between Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is yet an unexplored territory of comparative literature. Emerson was America’s poet-prophet. He was one of the first American intellectuals who thought freely, went beyond the conventions of contemporary time, and paved the way for a modern and secular America. Born in 1803 in Boston, Emerson lived his whole life in Massachusetts. He was the leading member of a group known as Transcendentalists. Transcendentalism, or American Transcendentalism, was a multi-faceted movement, which introduced

---

<sup>1</sup> Sardar M. Anwaruddin is a Lecturer in English at North South University in Bangladesh. Currently, he is working towards his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto in Canada. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of English as an International Language*, *Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, *BRAC University Journal*, *Asian EFL Journal* and the *Canadian Journal of Action Research*. His scholarly interests include cosmopolitanism, critical multiculturalism, applied linguistics and curriculum studies.

freethinking in religion, intuitive idealism in philosophy, individualism in literature, new spirit in social reforms and new optimism in the collective psyche. This New England movement flourished in the period between 1830 and 1860. Transcendentalism was influenced by Romanticism and post-Kantian idealism, and its major exponents were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), Margaret Fuller (1810-50) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-62). It began as a religious movement, but soon it found itself addressing various social issues as well.

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali-speaking versatile writer and thinker. Tagore inherited a great intellectual heritage from his father, Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), who was famously “known as the Maharshi, which means one who is both saint and sage, who lives in the presence of God and has attained the highest knowledge” (Kripalani 23). The *Maharshi* had tremendous intellectual influence on Rabindranath Tagore. At the age of seventeen, Tagore was sent to England for education, but before finishing school he came back to India and started his literary career. Soon he became a living institution in India, particularly in the Bengali speaking regions. He was a poet, novelist, dramatist, short-story writer, essayist, composer, lyricist, painter, philosopher, educationalist and social reformer. Although he had mastery in almost all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. In 1913, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature for his volume of poetry, *Gitanjali*.

When Tagore was growing up, Emerson was widely read in America and Europe. Already known to the Indian intelligentsia, Emerson’s presence became clearly visible during the period of Bengal Renaissance. Hudson Yeager, for example, mentions that “Emerson was among half a dozen American and British writers whose works were ‘set books,’ that is to say, required reading, in many of the secondary schools and colleges of Bengal” (24). Since Tagore did not attend formal schools, probably his house-tutors had introduced him to Emerson’s works. F.I. Carpenter, an Emerson scholar, mentions that “Tagore acknowledge[d] that he was influenced by Emerson” (Hudson 25), but Carpenter does not provide any evidence to support his claim. He says, “In modern times eminent Indian writers have praised Emerson and affirmed his influence on their thought – most notably Rabindranath Tagore – but the extent of this influence remains to be defined and documented” (qtd. in Hudson 25). Hudson explains that there was “only one volume of Emerson’s works” in Tagore’s personal library, but “there is no definite evidence that he ever read it” (25). Nevertheless, Tagore mentions Emerson’s name a number of times in his writings, but the references lack specificity. For example, in his novel *Gora*, a person reads a volume by Emerson, but we do not get any further information about the volume – its type or themes. In *Reminiscences*, Tagore writes, “It was the fashion in Bengal to assign each man of letters a place in comparison with a supposed compeer in the West. Thus one was the Byron of

Bengal, another the Emerson and so forth. I began to be styled by some the Bengal Shelly. This was insulting to Shelly and only likely to get me laughed at” (qtd. in Hudson 26). Thus, we may conclude that Tagore was familiar with Emerson and his writings, but we lack defensible evidence to understand the extent to which he read, or was influenced by, Emerson.

Nonetheless, an intellectual correspondence between these two writers is surprisingly identifiable. Both of them share many common grounds. For instance, they reject blind formalism in religion and strive to reach for an original and direct relationship with God. Relying on intuition, they establish an idealistic philosophy and maintain their belief in idealism throughout their lives. In addition, both of them depend heavily on Indian philosophical and religious thought for knowledge and inspiration. In the pages that follow, I explore the intellectual affinities between Emerson and Tagore, with specific references to their religious thoughts.

This comparative analysis – which may help us re-conceptualise our understanding of religion – is significant as we witness a resurgence of religion-based violence all over the world. The history of the world is filled with intense religious animosity and violence, for example, the bloody episodes of the Crusades, religious dominations by the colonial Europe, anti-Semitism and the horrors of Nazism. Some may argue that religious violence is “a thing of the past” which took place in some “primitive” societies. However, as Martha Nussbaum argues, “today we have many reasons to doubt this complacent self-assessment. Our situation calls urgently for searching critical self-examination, as we try to uncover the roots of ugly fears and suspicions that currently disfigure” our world (2). The 2002 Gujarat violence, the 2011 mass killings in Oslo and the 2012 shooting in a Sikh temple in Wisconsin are only a few examples of religious animosity that sufficiently warrant Nussbaum’s claim. Thus, in line with her argument, I present in this article a comparative discussion of religious thoughts of Emerson and Tagore, which I hope will provide a basis for critical examination of our understanding of religion and spirituality – both our own and those of others.

### **Rejection of Formalism**

An artistic creativity, keen observation of life and nature and courage to transcend conventionality inspired both Emerson and Tagore to reject religious formalism. As a versatile public intellectual, Emerson’s appeal and importance vary depending on the person who reads him. For example, John Dewey admires Emerson as a philosopher of democracy. Others read him as a social reformer, while many are interested in Emerson as a poet and essayist. For my purpose in this article, I focus on Emerson’s religious radicalism. Religious conventions of his time were too cut and dry for his artistically sensitive mind. Carl Bode succinctly summarises Emerson’s religious thoughts: “He [Emerson]

rejected Judaism as austere, Buddhism as esoteric, Christianity as fossilized. Gradually he clarified what he did want. The essentials were simple: a kindly God, a kindly universe, and a few universal laws” (Introduction xx). Emerson believes that formalism in religion keeps people away from God. Establishing an original and one-to-one relationship with God and the universe is the main objective of his religious writings and lectures. Rejecting all formalities, he says, “Whenever the pulpit is usurped by a formalist, then is the worshipper defrauded and disconsolate. We shrink as soon as the prayers begin, which do not uplift, but smite and offend us.... It seemed strange that the people should come to church” (“Divinity School Address” 138-39). He further claims that every person possesses the sentiment of virtue and thus lodges the Supreme Spirit in his<sup>2</sup> mind. After a long struggle with formalism in his contemporary Christianity, Emerson renounced his Church in 1832 (Acharya). Until the end of his intellectual career, he avoided formalism in thought as much as in action.

Like Emerson, Tagore also rejected formalism in religious belief and practice. He grew up during the period of Bengal Renaissance and was heavily influenced by the ideals of this movement. In his autobiography *My Life*, Tagore wrote:

I was born in 1861, not an important date in world history, but a date belonging to a great period in the history of Bengal.... We have the currents of three movements in the life of India.... One of these movements was religious, introduced by a great-hearted man of gigantic intelligence, Raja Rammohan Roy. He was a revolutionary, and tried to reopen the channel of spiritual life which had been obstructed for many years by the debris of formal and materialistic creeds.... I am proud to say that my father was one of the leaders of that movement. (80)

During this period, the Tagores, like many other Bengalis, felt the Western influences on their thoughts and life-styles.<sup>3</sup> In his boyhood, Tagore learned the lessons of unorthodoxy from his father who was an active member of the *Brahmo Samaj*.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, his was a poet’s mind, which was not tamed in a cage of convention. A trivial incident made him think deeply; every object of nature was of great importance to him. A small garden attached to his house

<sup>2</sup> Both Emerson and Tagore used “he” to refer to God and an individual. They also used “man” to mean humankind. Following them, I use “he” as a generic pronoun without any intention to be gender-biased.

<sup>3</sup> Although colonialism played a vital role in this regard, I do not focus on it in this article.

<sup>4</sup> *Brahmo* means a person who worships Brahman, and *samaj* means society or a group of united people. This society was founded during the Bengal Renaissance in the nineteenth century, and was based on the principles of enlightenment – an amalgamation of Western liberal philosophy and the traditions of ancient India. Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) was the founding father of the *Brahmo Samaj*. He strongly opposed idol worship, worked hard to abolish suttee (or sati) and promoted education among commoners.

was “a fairyland,” in which “miracles of beauty were of everyday occurrence” (*The Religion of Man* 97). What helped him see those miracles was his profound sensitivity. He wrote, “From my infancy I had a keen sensitiveness which kept my mind tingling with consciousness of the world around me, natural and human” (*The Religion of Man* 96-97).

Tagore’s mind grew up with freedom – “freedom from the dominance of any creed that had its sanction in the definite authority of some scripture, or in the teaching of some organized body of worshippers” (*The Religion of Man* 90). To him, religion was important for both personal and interpersonal experiences. He considered religion as “a process of self-creation” and freedom was at the heart of this process. Tagore compares humans, who constantly long for freedom, with a bird which attains its freedom twice: first, when it is born and second, when it learns to fly in the endless sky. In *The Religion of Man*, he writes:

In the Sanskrit Language the bird is described as ‘twice-born’ – once in its limited shell and then finally in the freedom of the unbounded sky. Those of our community who believe in the liberation of man’s limited self in the freedom of the spirit retain the same epithet for themselves. In all departments of life man shows this dualism – his existence within the range of obvious facts and his transcendence of it in a realm of deeper meaning. (202)

People who live their lives “within the range of obvious facts” cannot enjoy the freedom of growth. Here Tagore’s ideas echo Emerson’s transcendental manifesto that people cannot live their lives with freedom and establish an organic relationship with God until they transcend the *range* of conventionalities.

Much of Tagore’s inspiration and courage to reject formalism came from the Bauls<sup>5</sup> of Bengal. The Bauls strongly believe that one cannot achieve true love through any kind of compulsion, and that a lover should have freedom to love in a way that pleases him. They also reject the authority of religious institutions and scriptures, and instead believe that the human body is simultaneously a temple and a scripture. The Supreme Spirit resides in the human body and expresses the divine messages through it. In *The Religion of Man*, Tagore writes that one day he heard a Baul singer who sang of an intense yearning for the divine: “Temples and mosques obstruct thy path/ and I fail to hear thy call or to move,/ when the teachers and priest angrily crowed around me” (109). Here the Baul song that Tagore mentions echoes Emerson’s call for

---

<sup>5</sup> Literally, Baul means madcap. It refers to a group of people in Bengal who do not conform to religious formalism. They are mystic singers, and their songs are their primary medium of expression. They express their beliefs, spirituality, experience, social relationships and realisation of life through their songs.

giving up formalism and establishing a direct relationship with the Supreme Being. One does not have to go to temples and seek guidance from priests; he can directly communicate with his Divine Man who resides within him. With regard to this rejection of religious formalism, both Emerson and Tagore derived their primary inspiration from the Hindu set of scriptures, the *Upanishads*.

### **Conception of God: Over-Soul and *Jiban Debata***

Another point that brings Emerson and Tagore close to each other is their conception of God. Many conservative Christians of his time considered Emerson an atheist because he denounced “historical Christianity” which portrays Jesus as a demigod and fetishises Gospel miracles as “proof” of Christianity. He articulated his critique of this historical Christianity in his “Divinity School Address,” saying:

That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine, Obey thyself. That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen. (79)

Although it is hard to fully grasp the significance of what Emerson means by the notion of God-in-me, Lawrence Buell’s summary of Emerson’s conception of God may be helpful in this regard: “Emerson’s god is an immanent god, an indwelling property of human personhood and physical nature, not located in some otherworldly realm” (*Emerson* 162).

Emerson creates an image of his God and names it the Over-Soul. He also believes that one’s relationship with the Over-Soul must be original and unmediated. There should be no place for outside mediators such as churches or priests in this sacred relationship. He describes the Over-Soul as the Eternal One, and it is a common soul in which “every man’s particular being is contained” (“The Over-Soul” 210). Emerson maintains that “the Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us and casts his dread omniscience through us over things” (“The Over-Soul” 217). In this way, Emerson emphasises the notion of unity and claims that the union of the individual soul and the Over-Soul will benefit us more than anything else. It is interesting to note the influence of Indian thought on Emerson’s idea of the Over-Soul. According to Herambachandra Maitra, “Over-Soul is really the translation of a Sanskrit word” and some Western writers such as Emerson and Wordsworth translated “into the language of modern culture what was uttered by the sages of ancient India” (cited in Buell 194). In fact, Self and Over-soul refer to Brahman and Atman respectively in the *Upanishads*.

Like Emerson's Over-Soul, Tagore's anthropocentric god is also manifest in his creation. The Infinite Being becomes humanly definable in his presence among humans. Tagore names this Infinite Being *Jiban Debata*, the Lord of life. In many of his poems, Tagore describes the human attributes of his *Jiban Debata*: "Thou who art the innermost Spirit of my being" and "I see thine eyes gazing at the dark of my heart" (*The Religion of Man* 95-96). In *Gitanjali*, Tagore describes *Jiban Debata* as a friend saying, "Drunk with the joy of singing I forgot myself and call thee friend who art my lord" (294). When he describes his *Jiban Debata*, the human qualities of God become clearly visible. His relationship with his God is a son's relationship with a father. Two things are worth noting here: Tagore's opposition to idol worship and his belief in monotheism. From his family, he learned to develop an interest in the practice of a monotheistic religion. He also used his free-thinking to form religious beliefs, "refus[ing] to accept any religious teaching merely because people in [his] surroundings believed it to be true" (*The Religion of Man* 89-90). At Santiniketan,<sup>6</sup> there are many stones inscribed with texts of monotheism and "the pillars at the gate prohibit the bringing of idols within or the slaughter of beasts for food or sacrifice" (Thompson 77). Here a Christian influence is clear in Tagore, especially when he strongly believes in monotheism and treats God as a Father. For instance, each day at Santiniketan begins and ends with a collective prayer. The Morning Prayer reads:

Thou art our Father. Do Thou help us to know Thee as Father. We bow down to Thee. Do Thou never afflict us, O Father, by causing a separation between Thee and us. O Thou self-revealing One, O Thou Parent of the Universe, purge away the multitude of our sins, and send unto us whatever is good and noble, To Thee, from Whom spring joy and goodness, nay, Who art all goodness Thyself, to Thee we bow down now and for ever. (qtd. in Thompson 77)

Thus Tagore's *Jiban Debata* is a singular God who has many human attributes, and his relationship with his God is like a son's relationship with his father.

Tagore's *Jiban Debata* lives in man but does not reveal himself fully to the human individual. In *Gitanjali*, Tagore compares this situation with playing hide-and-seek. His *Jiban Debata* does not hide himself in the temples, so Tagore needs to seek him elsewhere. Using a Baul philosophy, Tagore asks, "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy

---

<sup>6</sup> Santiniketan means the abode of peace. Rabindranath Tagore's father Debendranath Tagore founded it in 1863. Rabindranath set up his school at Santiniketan in 1901. This school was later turned into a university named Visva-Bharati. The university is now internationally known for spreading knowledge based on Tagore's ideals.

God is not before thee!... Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained?" (*Gitanjali* 295-96). Thus, the Baul philosophy heavily influenced Tagore's conception of God.

To the Bauls, God is an "elusive bird" who dwells in the cage of human body. For example, Lalon Fakir,<sup>7</sup> a leading exponent of the Baul tradition, sings:

How does the Unknown Bird go  
into the cage and out again?  
Could I but seize it,  
I would put the fetters of my heart  
around its feet. (Shah 42)

Like Fakir, Tagore also struggles to put the Bird in chain, but it is not an easy task. He cannot see him; he can only feel him. This nature of his God always intrigues him. In his *Bangla Kabya Parichay*, Tagore quotes a song from Baul Madana:

The path is hidden by the temple and the mosque,  
and though I hear your call, O God, I cannot find the way;  
for against me stand my *guru* and *mursid*<sup>8</sup>....  
Your worship, when divided, dies,  
and on your gate are many locks—  
*puranas*, *Kuran*, *tash*<sup>9</sup>, *mala*<sup>10</sup>—  
this outward show makes Madana weep in sorrow. (qtd. in Dimock 37)

Like this Baul singer, Tagore is dejected because he hears the call of his *Jiban Debata*, but cannot find the way of being united with him. In *Gitabitan*, Tagore sings, "Who is he, who has made me wander, mad, from quarter to quarter of the town? I have wandered through the forests and through the mountains in my search for him. And now I am lost, weeping in my sorrow" (qtd. in Dimock 41). This search for *Jiban Debata* was Tagore's lifelong pursuit. Like Emerson, he did not join thousands of his contemporaries to seek God through rigid formalities and historical accounts of miracles. He kept himself away from the dominance of creed and authority of scriptures. Thus, both of them envisioned a kind and friendly God who manifests himself in his creation.

<sup>7</sup> Lalon Fakir was the chief guru of the Bauls (Dimock). Although he is believed to have been uneducated, he composed hundreds of songs which were the manifesto of Baul philosophy. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but he died in 1890. Tagore was influenced by Fakir and used Baul lyrics, melodies and tunes in his own songs. The national anthem of Bangladesh, composed by Tagore, is based on an adapted Baul tune (Haque).

<sup>8</sup> Muslim guide or teacher.

<sup>9</sup> Muslim prayer beads.

<sup>10</sup> Hindu prayer beads.



### Original and Unmediated Relationship with God

Both Emerson and Tagore sought to establish an original and unmediated relationship with God. One of Emerson's original contributions is his transcendental manifesto presented in his "Divinity School Address," in which he rejects formalism in religion saying that every person possesses sentiment of virtue and thus shares the Supreme Spirit in his mind. Thus, he defies the authority of the church and the scriptural miracles. In the first paragraph of his famous essay "Nature," Emerson writes:

The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?... Let us demand our own works and laws and worship. (7)

At the heart of his thought is an argument that we should have an original, fresh, and unmediated relationship with God. Emerson further emphasises his argument for this unmediated relationship in his "Divinity School Address" by saying, "Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil" (87). This call for an unmediated relationship with God shows how radical and revolutionary Emerson's religious thought was, especially in a historical era dominated by conservatism and social and religious hierarchy.

Like Emerson, Tagore also yearns for an original relationship with his *Jiban Debata*. He does not seek any assistance from mediators who might stand on his way to the Divine. In his most earnest prayer, he wants the revelation of the Self-Revealing One in himself, and with this hope he always stays close to his *Jiban Debata*. As Thompson writes, "God is strangely close to his [Tagore's] thought. He is often more theistic than any Western theist. This has always struck me as the least-noted and yet the most remarkable thing in his religion, this way in which God becomes more personalised for him, the Indian, in the most intimate, individual fashion, than He does for the ordinary Christian" (83).

The teachings of Zarathustra<sup>11</sup> are of particular importance in Tagore's longing for an original relationship with his *Jiban Dabata*. Zarathustra believes that religion does not consist of magical rites or undefined conceptions of natural phenomena. Instead, it is about intellectual understanding and moral knowledge. He proclaims that "religion has its truth in its moral significance,

---

<sup>11</sup> Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, was an ancient Persian prophet. The period in which he lived and preached his religion is a bone of contention. Many historians place him in a period of 1,000 BCE or earlier. Others believe that he lived some time before the year of 485 BCE. Zarathustra is famous for his doctrine of a righteous God, his recognition of the existence of evil, and his emphasis on morality (see Nigosian for details).

not in external practices of imaginary value” (*The Religion of Man* 74). He frees himself from orthodox forms of worship and magical rituals. Tagore thinks that Zarathustra did not learn his ways of thinking from any books or teachers. Instead, it was a process of illumination that came from within. Tagore further believes that this process was “a communication of his [Zarathustra’s] universal self to his personal self” (*The Religion of Man* 78). This is similar to the concept of the union between the universal self and the personal self in the *Upanishads*. This *Upanishadic* teaching is obvious in Zarathustra when he says, “When I conceived of Thee, O Mazda, as the very First and the Last, as the most Adorable One, as the Father of the Good Thought, as the Creator of Truth and Right, as the Lord Judge of our actions in life, then I made a place for Thee in my very eyes” (qtd. in *The Religion of Man* 77). Thus, Tagore’s admiration for Zarathustra reveals both his religious views and the inspirations he derived from this ancient Persian prophet.

In short, the ideals of the Bengal Renaissance, the traditions of the Bauls, the teachings of Zarathustra, the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and his own artistic creativity helped Tagore establish an original and unmediated relationship with his God. As Amartya Sen writes, at the heart of Tagore’s religious belief is “the idea of a direct, joyful and totally fearless relationship with God” (96). Through his lifelong struggle for *mukti*, the liberation of the soul, Tagore came to a realisation that *mukti* comes not through religious formalities, but through the renunciation of the individual self for the sake of the Supreme Soul. Chakravarty summarises Tagore’s religious belief and practice in the following words: he was “a man of prayer, but he used his freedom as an artist in seeking the newness and wonder of creation through every avenue of the mind, the senses, and the processes of his own spiritual growth” (255).

### **Reliance on Intuition**

In order to establish an original and unmediated relationship with God, both Emerson and Tagore rely heavily on intuition. Emerson believes that the Universal Spirit prevails both in human beings and in nature, and all men and women, being part of the Universal Spirit, possess divinity. He says, “Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets.... He saw that God incarnates himself in man.... He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, ‘I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or, see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think’” (“Divinity School Address” 134). Nonetheless, a person must discover his own self to recognise his inherent divinity. Every human being consists of a particular body with “certain atoms drawn from nature” and a particular soul with “certain spiritual powers drawn from the Universal Spirit.” In this way, a person’s “body [is] part of nature,

obeying the laws of matter, and his soul [is] part of the Over-Soul, governed by the laws of spirit" (Boller 78-79).

For Emerson, the human soul has its own power of reasoning, and he wants us to rely on this faculty of Reason. In the essay "Spiritual Laws," Emerson describes the situation of those who do not depend on this faculty as follows:

Our young people are diseased with the theological problems of original sin, origin of evil, predestination and the like.... These are the soul's mumps and measles and whooping-coughs, and those who have not caught them cannot describe their health or prescribe the cure. A simple mind will not know these enemies. (188)

Here Emerson puts his trust in human nature which, according to him, always leads people to the right path. Instead of importing difficulties from outside, everybody should rely on intuition through which the moral laws of the universe are manifested. Emerson comments, "The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves.... Thus, in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire.... If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice" ("Divinity School Address" 131).

To discover the true human nature, to understand the justice in human soul and to avoid "the soul's mumps and measles" ("Spiritual Laws" 188), Emerson strongly recommends that we rely on intuition. For him, no evil exists in the human soul. This over-dependency on human nature and intuition has attracted much criticism, but Emerson stuck to his argument that everybody should follow his own soul. He was of the view that "it is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude" ("Self-Reliance" 143). This independence of solitude means the independence of soul and a complete reliance on self. Learning from one's own self is therefore more important than learning from others because the greatest teacher hides himself in the human soul and he never misguides anybody. Emerson thus instructs his followers: "Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession.... Where is the master who could have taught Shakespeare?... Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare" ("Self-Reliance" 160-61). In this way, Emerson championed intuition and rejected the idea of imitation.

Like Emerson, Tagore also places much emphasis on intuition. He believes that the vision of truth needed for the pursuit of establishing a one-to-

one relationship with *Jiban Debata* comes through intuition, not imitation. Therefore, in *Sadhana*, he explains, “Our pursuit of truth in the domain of nature therefore is through analysis and the gradual methods of science, but our apprehension of truth in our soul is immediate and through direct intuition” (37). Tagore believed that religion is not something stagnant; it is rather a continuous process of discovering the self in a universal context. At the end of “The Vision,” Tagore declares:

The man whose inner vision is bathed in an illumination of his consciousness at once realizes the spiritual unity reigning supreme over all differences. His mind no longer awkwardly stumbles over individual facts of separateness in the human world, accepting them as final. He realizes that peace is in the inner harmony which dwells in truth and not in any outer adjustments. (*The Religion of Man* 106)

Tagore maintains that peace comes through a religion which is based on inner truth, not merely on outward rituals, traditions and conventionalities. In addition to finding this peace, reliance on intuition is also important to feel the presence of God in life. In *Sadhana*, Tagore writes that “He is a God who hides himself. He can be felt in the dark, but not seen in the day.... The vision of the Supreme One in our own soul is a direct and immediate intuition, not based on any ratiocination or demonstration at all” (42). Here Tagore’s emphasis on intuition is very much similar to Emerson’s: “Speak to his heart, and the man becomes suddenly virtuous” (“The Over-Soul” 214). Tagore’s claim also goes along with the Emersonian idea that our intuition illuminates our spiritual world like the flashes of light. Scientific analyses and empirical methods do not work in the spiritual world. In short, for an authentic and original relationship with God, both Emerson and Tagore depended more on intuition than on scientific reasoning and religious rituals.

### **Emphasis on the Human Dimension of Religion**

In addition to relying on intuition, Emerson and Tagore placed much emphasis on the human dimension of religion. According to Robert Gordon, Emerson’s confidence in human nature and his claim that humans are essentially good – not fallen – are revolutionary. Due to his belief that all humans are essentially divine, many accuse Emerson of treachery toward God and man. However, he never ceased to interpret religion in a human way. He had enormous faith in the human soul, and nature provided him with necessary lessons for executing the laws of the soul. While many Christians were obsessed with the notion of original sin, Emerson looked at nature to find an answer to this question of original sin. Indeed, nature provided him with an answer, and he maintained that there was no reason why the fall of Adam and Eve would make us eternally sinful. In the essay “Spiritual Laws,” he writes:

Let us draw a lesson from nature, which always works by short ways. When the fruit is ripe, it falls. When the fruit is despatched, the leaf falls. The circuit of the waters is mere falling. The walking of man and all animals is a falling forward. All our manual labor and works of strength, as prying, splitting, digging, rowing and so forth, are done by dint of continual falling, and the globe, earth, moon, comet, sun, star, fall for ever and ever. (191)

The fall of Adam and Eve did not bring our damnation; rather, it gave us an opportunity to discover our own divinity that we inherited from God. The fall also did not create any distance between God and humans because all human beings are part of the Universal Spirit.

Emerson argues that humans have the ability to attain an insight into moral and spiritual laws, and this insight never comes through any mediators. One needs to rely on intuition to understand the moral and spiritual laws which can guide him to the path of illumination and oneness with the Over-Soul. Emerson further believes that misinterpretations of miracles and revelation cause a distance between God and man. Thus, defying the authority of the church and the scriptural miracles, Emerson advocates a one-to-one relationship between man and God. By emphasising the goodness of human nature and by re-conceptualising the roles of tradition and rituals, Emerson gives a fundamentally human character to his religion.

Similarly, Tagore also envisions a human religion by focusing more on the human attributes of God than on the supernatural ones. In the essay "The Vision," he describes his religion as "a poet's religion" which is "neither that of an orthodox man of piety nor that of a theologian" (91). He uses a metaphor to describe the relationship between his poetic life and religious life. He says, "My religious life has followed the same mysterious line of growth as has my poetical life. Somehow they are wedded to each other and, though their betrothal had a long period of ceremony, it was kept secret to me" (*The Religion of Man* 91). Tagore realised that as an artist he expresses a spiritual manifestation of a Being who seeks expression through all his works of art. Tagore always remained true to this Being, who lives within him, because Tagore's creative works are simultaneously his own and the Being's. He was of the view that "it may be that it was the same creative Mind that is shaping the universe to its eternal idea" (*The Religion of Man* 94). Thus "man, as a creation, represents the Creator" (101), and Tagore finds this representation as a comradeship. Recognising the Supreme Being in the human form, he named his religion "the religion of Man." He felt that he "had found [his] religion at last, the religion of Man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and co-operation" (*The Religion of Man* 95). Tagore describes the human personality of his God as follows:

I have mentioned in connection with my personal experience some songs which I had often heard from wandering village singers... called Bauls... who declare in their songs the divinity of Man, and express for him an intense feeling of love. Coming from men who are unsophisticated, living a simple life in obscurity, it gives us a clue to the inner meaning of all religions. For it suggests that these religions are never about a God of cosmic force, but rather about the God of human personality. (*The Religion of Man* 16-17)

This passage clearly shows how the Bauls of Bengal had influenced Tagore's conception of his *Jiban Debata* as a God of human personality.

In addition to the songs of the Bauls, teachings of Zarathustra also seem to have influenced Tagore's vision of a human religion. In "The Prophet," Tagore calls Zarathustra "the greatest of all the pioneer prophets who showed the path of freedom to man, the freedom of moral choice" (*The Religion of Man* 74). His admiration for Zarathustra reveals some of his own basic views on religion, e.g., the universe in which we live is a purely human universe. Our perception, reasoning and understanding are the outcome of our own efforts to exist in harmony with nature. In primitive ages, physical existence was the most important concern for humans, as they constantly endeavoured to master the natural phenomena for the sake of their own existence. Thus, the religion of the primitive people was a connection between the mysterious, often hostile, powers of nature and their own potentials and attempts to exist in an unfavourable environment. In other words, their religion was a physical religion. After knowing the outside world and its phenomena, people wanted to know the inside, and thus they developed their spirituality. With the development and change of people's understanding of the physical world, their spirituality has also changed its directions. The forms of worship have changed as well; they have evolved "from the external and magical towards the moral and spiritual significance" (*The Religion of Man* 73). Tagore believes that the first change of direction in religion – from physical to moral and spiritual – took place when Zarathustra prioritised the inner over the outer.

However, Tagore regrets that many people fail to understand the greatness and moral values of Zarathustra's teachings as "we still see around us men who fearfully follow, hoping thereby to gain merit, the path of blind formalism, which has no living moral source in the mind" (*The Religion of Man* 74). Once again, Tagore rejects formalism and calls for a human religion because he has strong faith in the human soul. In this human religion, his *Jiban Debata* resides in the human soul and manifests itself in human personality. This human dimension of Tagore's religion is very similar to that of Emerson who believed that "The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God" ("The Over-Soul" 224).

The above discussion shows how Emerson and Tagore used their free-thinking, creativity and imagination to reject formalism in religion, develop the conception of a kind God, rely on intuition to establish an original relationship with the Supreme Being and envision a human religion. I shall now briefly focus on Emerson's acquaintance with the Indian scriptures and Tagore's familiarity with the Western philosophy as a way of understanding the firm proximity between their ideas.

### Emerson's Acquaintance with the Indian Scriptures

Harold Bloom has called Emerson "the mind of America," and Goldberg believes this "mind was shaped in large part by Asia" (26). Most Emerson scholars agree that Indian philosophy was central to Emerson's education and thought. Of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Emerson wrote:

It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spake to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us. (Ctd. in Goldberg 32)

Alan Hodder claims that Emerson read the Indian scriptures with more attention and enthusiasm than any other texts in the last few decades of his life. He paid tribute to "Hindoo books [as] the best gymnastics for the mind" (ctd. in Buell 175). He started reading about Indian philosophy, mythology and theology in *The Edinburgh Review* between 1820 and 1825. We see Indian influence in many of his essays, poems, letters and journal entries. I briefly describe three of the most commonly used Indian concepts found in Emerson: *Brahma*, *maya* and *karma*.

Brahma is the god of creation and one of the Hindu trinity – the others being Vishnu, the preserver and saviour of the world, and Shiva, the destroyer or dissolver of the world. Emerson named one of his short poems "Brahma" (1856):

If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;  
Shadow and sunlight are the same;  
The vanished gods to me appear;  
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;  
When me they fly, I am the wings;

I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,  
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;  
But thou, meek lover of the good!  
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven. (665)

In this poem, Emerson describes the mystery of Brahma: it is almost impossible for humans to understand the “subtle ways” of Brahma because his character is beyond human comprehension. However, at the end of the poem we see the light of hope that we can find him although “strong gods” look for him “in vain.” This is the human supremacy, as Brahma assures us, that we can find him if we are the “meek lover of the good.” In “The Over-Soul,” Emerson recapitulates the *Vedantic* precept of the formless manifestation of Brahman: “We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE” (210-11).

Another Indian concept frequently used in Emerson’s works is *maya*, which is also important to understand Brahma. In its simplest form, *maya* means a magical power in which the Creator reveals Himself and the mystery of His creation. A.L. Herman describes *Maya* as “the means by which *nirguna*, or higher, Brahman is enabled to manifest Itself as *saguna*, or lower, Brahman, is called *maya*.... The *Upanishads* answer this all-important cosmological question about origins by indicating simply that the power or *maya* of God made all this” (108). *Maya* has a double meaning because it is simultaneously a product of power of creativity and the power itself. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* says, “Know that nature (*prakṛti*) is *maya* and that the user of *maya* is great Isvara. And the whole world is filled with beings that are part of him” (qtd. in Herman 109). This concept of *maya* always fascinated Emerson, and he named one of his short poems “Maia:”

Illusion works impenetrable,  
Weaving webs innumerable,  
Her gay pictures never fail,  
Crowds each on other, veil on veil,  
Charmer who will be believed  
By Man who thirsts to be deceived. (*Emerson* 432)

In this poem, Emerson shows the deceiving power of *maya*. He also talks about *maya* many times in his journals. For example,



The illusion that strikes me [most] as the masterpiece of Maya, is, the timidity with which we assert our moral sentiment. We are made of it, the world is built by it, Things endure as they share it, all beauty, all health, all intelligence exist by it; yet 'tis the last thing we dare utter, we shrink to speak it, or to range ourselves on its side." (*Journals* XV 243)

Agreeing with the idea that the whole world is made of Maya, he quotes from the *Vedas*, a sacred text of the Aryans: "The world is born of Maya" (*Journals* XVI 33).

Another important Indian philosophical concept that heavily influenced Emerson is karma. In Sanskrit, karma means action or work. In *Upanishadic* and *Vedic* traditions, karma signifies "the results or consequences of action" and, more distinctively, "the unwanted, to-be-avoided-at-all-costs results or fruits of action" (Herman 73). The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Bhagabad Gita* mention that disobeyers must face grave consequences. The law of karma, in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* IV.4.6, says: "This is what happens to the man who desires. To whatever his mind is attached, the self becomes that in the next life. Achieving that end, it returns again to this world" (qtd. in Herman 131). The doctrine of karma is a device to link up actions and their consequences of this life and of the next. *The Svetasvatara Upanishad* states two important doctrines about karma: (i) "According to its actions, the embodied self chooses repeatedly various forms in various conditions in the next life," and (ii) "according to its own qualities and acts, the embodied self chooses the kinds of forms, large and small, that it will take on" (qtd. in Herman 131). Influenced by the karmic laws, Emerson emphasises the good deeds of people. In "Self-Reliance," he urges us not to depend on good luck because nobody should take any piece of good fortune as a good omen. He concludes: "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles" ("Self-Reliance" 164). Emerson's notion of self-reliance resonates with the karmic law that we can choose whatever we want to be; everything is determined by our action/karma.

### Tagore as a Citizen of the World

Unlike Emerson who lived his whole life in New England, Tagore travelled around the world. His first direct encounter with the West took place when he was seventeen years old. His stay in England was not pleasant; London was a grim and solitary city for him. However, his visit to England was only the beginning of his life-long friendship with the West. In his essay "The Hope and Despair of Bengal" Tagore writes:

The European idea in which freedom predominates, and the Indian idea in which welfare predominates; the profound thought of the eastern countries and the active thought of the western countries; European acquisitiveness

and Indian conservatism; the imagination of the eastern countries and the practical intelligence of the West – what a full character will be formed from a synthesis between these two. (qtd. in Dutta and Robinson 77)

Tagore envisioned a synthesis of East and West. Going beyond a narrow sense of nationalism, he dreamed of a world where different civilisations would meet and share their best with each other. One of his goals of establishing Santiniketan was to provide a meeting of East and West (Surie).

Tagore's intellectual intimacy with the West is probably best captured in his disagreements with Gandhi (see Sen for details). If Gandhi is a symbol of Indian nationalism, Tagore may be described as an internationalist, a citizen of the world. Tagore's notion of cosmopolitanism is artistically captured in his novel *The Home and the World*. In this novel, he "champions love among individuals and nations. Love for one's own country, Tagore asserts, should not result in hatred for another's, nor should love for the homeland overshadow one's search for truth" (Quayum 35-36). Tagore speaks through Nikhil, the protagonist of the novel, and denounces a narrow sense of nationalism. By contrasting Nikhil with Sandip, Tagore shows how his conception of cosmopolitanism transcends the pettiness of nationalism that prevents individuals from connecting with the world. In addition to this novel, Tagore dwells on this issue of nationalism versus cosmopolitanism in many of his essays, lectures and poems. For example, in "Nationalism in India," he writes:

Even though from childhood I had been taught that idolatry of the nation is almost better than reverence for God and humanity, I believe I have outgrown that teaching, and it is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity. (*A Tagore Reader* 200)

Thus, Tagore's cosmopolitan sensibility is based primarily on the love for humanity. In many of his poems, he deals with the poetics of love and humility that envisions what Quayum describes as "an empire of the free – an international commonwealth based on disinterested and self-sacrificing nationalism" (44). For example, in the poem "Aikatan [Harmony]," Tagore sings: "I am a poet of the world,/ I try to capture its melody, wherever it rises" (*Sanchayita* 620). Thus, Tagore's ideal of cosmopolitanism is attached to his love for humanity as well as to his works of art and aesthetic enjoyment (for details, see Saranindranath Tagore).

Additionally, the spirit of Western social service was fascinating to Tagore. He often praised the Western ideals of freedom, law and order. In his *The Spirit of Japan*, Tagore writes, "Europe has been teaching us the higher obligations of public good above those of the family and the clan, and the sacredness of law, which makes society independent of caprice, securing for it

continuity of progress, and guarantees justice to all men” (ctd. in Radhakrishnan 255-56). However, Tagore was not blind to the faults of the West. He was particularly upset by the West’s hunger for war. According to S. Radhakrishnan, Tagore at one point came to believe that “the war is a sign that the Western civilization is dead and not alive, inert and not alert, mechanical and not spiritual. It looks upon man as a machine and not a soul. It stands for matter with its automatism and not life with its joy” (262). In short, the West had great influence on Tagore, but he did not uncritically adopt all aspects of Western civilisation. He always envisioned a friendly meeting of East and West. As Dutta and Robinson informs us, Tagore “had come to feel, not unreasonably, that ‘East and West [had] met in friendship in my own person’ [and] he continued to believe in this ideal implicitly until his last decade” (77).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, both Emerson and Tagore sought for a religion which would help establish an original and unmediated relationship with God. For both of them, the human soul and its intuition were more important than temples and scriptures. They advocated self-reliance and dependency on human hearts as guiding principles. Although Emerson and Tagore belonged to different literary periods and cultural traditions, their religious thoughts had striking similarities. They yearned for a human religion instead of a supernatural one. In this human religion, God was not in heaven, but very close to man. In summary, Tagore’s *Jiban Debata*, who is his God, Father and Friend, dwells in human souls, and Emerson’s God, the Over-Soul, contains “every man’s particular being” (“The Over-Soul” 210). Thus, rejecting orthodoxy and traditions, both Emerson and Tagore came to de-supernaturalise religion and God and frame their own unique, yet overlapping, beliefs and practices. This intellectual and philosophical correspondence between these two philosopher-writers is significant in comparative literature and cross-cultural understanding because it provides us with what Nussbaum would call an “imaginative capacity” to transcend contemporary traditions and dominant modes of thinking. It also teaches us to go beyond traditions and establish an unmediated, joyful and organic relationship with the Supreme Being. In this way, it enriches us with valuable insights into our own religious and ideological thoughts and, at the same time, empowers us with a better understanding of those who adhere to a different value system – which is what we need, more than anything else, at a time when the world is exploding through intra- and inter-religious feuds, and religious hatred and bigotry are spreading throughout the world like a pandemic virus.

## Works Cited

- Acharya, Shanta. *The Influence of Indian Thought on Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001.
- Bode, Carl, ed. *The Portable Emerson*. New York: Penguin, 1981.
- Boller, Paul F. *American Transcendentalism, 1830-1860: An Intellectual Inquiry*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974.
- Buell, Lawrence. *Emerson*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2003.
- , ed. *The American Transcendentalists*. New York: The Modern Library, 2006.
- Dimock, Edward. "Rabindranath Tagore – 'The Greatest of the Bauls of Bengal.'" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 19.1 (1959): 33-51.
- Dutta, Krishna and Andrew Robinson. *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man*. London: Bloomsbury, 1995.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Brahma." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 665.
- . "Divinity School Address." *The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings*. Ed. Lawrence Buell. New York: The Modern Library, 2006. 129-45.
- . "Divinity School Address." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 72-91.
- . "Experience." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 266-90.
- . "Maia." *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Collected Poems and Translations*. New York: The Library of America, 1994. 432.
- . "Nature." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 7-50.
- . "Self-Reliance." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 138-64.
- . "Spiritual Laws." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 187-208.
- . "The Over-Soul." *The Portable Emerson*. Ed. Carl Bode. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1946. 209-27.
- . *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Ed. Merton M. Sealts, Jr. Vol. X. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1973.
- . *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Glen M. Johnson. Vol. XVI. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1982.
- . *The letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Ed. Ralph L. Rusk. Vol. I. New York: Columbia UP, 1939.
- Goldberg, Philip. *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation – How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*. New York: Harmony Books, 2010.

- Gordon, Robert C. *Emerson and the Light of India: An Intellectual History*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2007.
- Hamilton, Sue. *Indian Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Haque, Riyazul. *Lalon Shabitya o Darshon [Lalon's Literature and Philosophy]*. Dhaka: Muktodhara, 1976.
- Herman, A.L. *An Introduction to Indian Thought*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976.
- Hodder, Alan D. *Emerson's Rhetoric of Revelation*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1989.
- Hudson, Yeager. *Emerson and Tagore: The Poet as Philosopher*. Notre Dame, IN: Cross Roads Books, 1988.
- Kripalani, Krishna. *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography*. New York: Grove Press, 1962.
- Lago, Mary M., ed. *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore 1911-1941*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1972.
- Moore, Thomas. *The Soul's Religion: Cultivating a Profoundly Spiritual Way of Life*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- Nigosian, S. A. *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition and Modern Research*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1993.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *The New Religious Intolerance: Overcoming the Politics of Fear in an Anxious Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2012.
- Quayum, Mohammad A. "In Search of a Spiritual Commonwealth: Tagore's *The Home and the World*." *Journal of South Asian Literature* 31/32.1/2 (1996/1997): 32-45.
- Radhakrishnan, S. *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*. London: Macmillan, 1919.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Collected Poems and Translations*. New York: The Library of America, 1994.
- Riepe, Dale. "Emerson and Indian Philosophy." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28.1 (1967): 115-22.
- . "The Indian Influence in American Philosophy: Emerson to Moore." *Philosophy East and West* 17:1/4 (1967): 125-37.
- Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*. London: Allen Lane, 2005.
- Shah, Lalou. *Songs of Lalou*. Trans. Brother James. Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1987.
- Sinha, Sasadhar. *Social Thinking of Rabindranath Tagore*. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1962.
- Surie, Poonam. "A living legacy: The Relevance of Tagore in Today's World." *Forum for World Literature Studies* 2.3 (2010): 386-95. Web. 12 Aug. 2012.

- Stunkel, Kenneth R. "Rabindranath Tagore and the Aesthetics of Postmodernism." *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 17.2 (2003): 237-59. Web. 10 Aug. 2012.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. "From *Gitanjali*." *A Tagore Reader*. Ed. Amiya Chakravarty. 1961. Boston: Beacon, 1966. 294-308.
- . "From *Talks in China*." *A Tagore Reader*. Ed. Amiya Chakravarty. Boston: Beacon, 1961. 206-12.
- . "My School." *A Tagore Reader*. Ed. Amiya Chakravarty. 1961. Boston: Beacon, 1966. 218-23.
- . *Sadhana*. New York: Macmillan, 1914.
- . *Sanchayita* [*Poems, Songs and Verse Dramas*]. Kolkata: Sahityam, 2003.
- . "The Artist." *A Tagore Reader*. Ed. Amiya Chakravarty. 1961. Boston: Beacon, 1966. 257-64.
- . "The Modern Age." *A Tagore Reader*. Ed. Amiya Chakravarty. 1961. Boston: Beacon, 1966. 272-73.
- . *The Religion of Man*. New York: Macmillan, 1931.
- Tagore, Saranindranath. "Tagore's Conception of Cosmopolitanism: A Reconstruction." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 77.4 (2008): 1070-84. Web. 6 June 2013.
- Thompson, Edward J. *Rabindranath Tagore: His Life and Work*. Calcutta, India: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, n.d.
- Williams, Lloyd P. "Intuitions of a Free Mind: Emerson's View of the Education of His Times." *Peabody Journal of Education* 37.6 (1960): 365-69. Web. 24 July 2012.