Chapter 6

Hindu-Catholic Worldview: Upadhyay’s Theological Restatement

Introduction
The restatement of Christian faith through Indian philosophical categories was one of the chief objectives of Upadhyay’s Hindu-Catholicism. A comprehensive study of Upadhyay’s Hindu-Catholic identity needs to pay attention to his efforts at restating Christian faith in Hindu thought patterns. As we had seen, for Brahmabandhab, thought patterns and philosophical categories were key ingredients of Hindu identity. Upadhyay’s restatement of Christian faith in Hindu categories involves an aspect which is extremely significant in the sense that it represents an attempt to articulate Christian worldview in a Hindu cultural milieu using Hindu thought patterns. This involves the restatement of Catholic faith in an entirely different worldview. It is from this perspective we need to understand Upadhyay’s theology which is an effort in articulating Christian truths through Indian philosophical categories.

The objective of this chapter consists in bringing together the three broad categories involved in Upadhyay’s Hindu-Catholic worldview: (1) the restatement of the divine reality (2) restatement of human reality and (3) the re-articulation of the ‘world.’ These restatements are done by Brahmabandhab within the framework of Thomism and Hindu Philosophy. This chapter also makes explicit the implicit theology of religions of Upadhyay. This chapter shall not focus on every theological pronouncement of Upadhyay; rather the focus will be on those theological aspects which have a bearing on the Hindu-Catholic restatement. This chapter comprises six main sections: the first section delineates Upadhyay’s theological framework. The second section focuses on Upadhyay’s restatement of the Divine reality. The third section delineates Upadhyay’s restatement of the Christian concept of Trinity as saccidananda. The fourth section focuses on his reinterpretation of human reality. The fifth

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1 Upadhyay groups ‘three real objects of knowledge’ as follows: “The first reality is the external world; the second reality is the self; and the third and the highest reality is God.” B. Upadhyay, “Three Capital Lies,” Sp-M (September 1897), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 121.
section outlines Upadhyay’s restatement of the ‘World.’ The sixth part focuses on Upadhyay’s inclusivist theology of religions.

1. Upadhyay’s Theological Framework
As we have already noted Upadhyay sought to find points of contact between Christianity and Hinduism. From the Christian side, he depended very much on Thomism; from the side of Hindu tradition, from 1898 onwards he relies on Advaita Vedanta of Sankara. These two systems form the basis of Upadhyay’s theological framework.

1.1 Theological Discourse: Upadhyay’s Method
Brahmabandhab was conscious of the fact that an attempt at restating Christian faith was a huge task. To achieve this he engaged himself in a carefully thought out hermeneutical enterprise. However, we need to remember that Brahmabandhab’s restatement of Christian worldview in terms of Hindu worldview is not a straightforward attempt. Much of the restatement takes the shape of evolutionary character in the sense that he keeps clarifying Christian faith and doctrines in the process of refuting his ‘opponents’ and detractors. But he also tries to find corresponding concepts of Christianity in Hindu philosophical thought patterns. Given the ad hoc nature of Upadhyay’s restatement it would not be possible to find a comprehensive or complete treatment of relevant themes under discussion. He is interested in showing that such an attempt is possible.

It is important to note the method used by Upadhyay in articulating his Hindu-Catholic Worldview. Most of Upadhyay articulations in terms of restatement of Christian doctrines take the form of natural theology or philosophical theology. Natural theology is a way of speaking about God and human realities by appealing to reason. Here, the point of departure to speak about God is not scripture or tradition but human reason. From the viewpoint of method, natural theology or philosophical theology relies basically on rational deduction. The basis of natural theology stems from the Christian belief that God can be known, at least in part, through human reason and through the created order.

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2 According to Upadhyay, the “most effective weapon against pantheism is the philosophy of St. Thomas.” B. Upadhyay, “Three Capital Lies,” Sp-M (September 1897), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 122.

Upadhyay uses the method of natural theology in his articulations of Christian faith. As a rule he rarely quotes the Bible in enunciating Christian faith. The reason for this seems to be a matter of method and procedure since philosophical theology has a greater appeal to non-Christians. The common ground here is human reason which is accessible to all. We can see Upadhyay's reliance on this method in his tract entitled *A Short Treatise on the Existence of God* (originally a lecture delivered in 1893). The entire approach of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (B. C. Banerji at that time) in this treatise is based on natural theology. In his lecture on "The Infinite and the Finite" Upadhyay makes his method clear: "I will dwell upon the subject simply from the standpoint of reason. I will not quote any dogma or doctrine, or any authority; nor shall I quote any scriptures, the Vedas or the Puranas, the Bible or the Koran. I will appeal to you in the name of reason only which is the common heritage of all."\(^4\)

Upadhyay's theological method consists in providing a 'rational basis' to Christian faith and truth. In this regard, Brahmabandhab is firmly rooted in Catholic tradition, for he quotes from the Constitution, *Dei Filius*, of the First Vatican Council (1870): "If any one asserts that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty from created things by the natural light of human reason, let him be anathema."\(^5\) He further adds: "Christian philosophers and doctors have always taught that the existence of a personal God can be proved by reason. But reason may be hampered in its act by an ill-disposed will."\(^6\)

An important aspect in Upadhyay's natural theology is his appeal to 'truth' as the common ground between Hinduism and Christianity. According to Upadhyay, though Hinduism contains 'sublime truth' the fullness of truth is to be found in the religion of Christ. In Brahmabandhab's thinking the universal human quest for truth finds its fulfillment and perfection in God's explicit revelation in Christ. Jesus Christ is the ultimate embodiment of both religious and moral truth. Christological grace purifies and perfects what is naturally good, reflecting the truth and goodness of the Creator. Here, what is implied is the classical Catholic doctrine regarding the natural knowledge of God through human reason.

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4 U. Brahmabandhav, *The Infinite and the Finite*, third edition (Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918) 1. The copy of this treatise can be found in the Goethals Indian Library Archives.


Both Thomism and the Advaita of Sankara, which operated within the classical traditions, proceed mainly on rational basis. What Upadhyay is trying to do here is extremely important from the methodological perspective: First of all he is laying a theological foundation in order to communicated Catholic truths in a Hindu cultural milieu. Secondly, he is also constructing a hermeneutic framework to make Catholic truths intelligible in a Hindu atmosphere. Here we do find some serious and creative efforts on the part of Upadhyay to bridge two systems of religious thought by finding commonalities and categories.

During Upadhyay’s time Thomism was the prevailing theology and philosophy within Catholic tradition. Thomism, understood as the schools and systems of philosophy and theology which take the teachings and the thought of Aquinas as their authoritative source, received considerable encouragement from the encyclical Aeterni Patris of Leo XIII in 1879.7 This encyclical, which was ‘On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy,’ specifically called for a revival of Thomistic philosophy in order to address the problems of the modern world.8 On the one hand, the exhortation of the encyclical prompted Catholic philosophers to apply Thomistic principles to the problems arising in the modern cultural situation and such attempts led to a great deal of serious philosophical and theological reflection.9 On the other hand, this official endorsement of Thomism created what may be termed as a philosophical and theological orthodoxy which was somewhat suspicious and even hostile to the more original and independent thinkers like Maurice Blondel.10 In Copestone’s words, it created a ‘party line’ mentality.11 Any experimentations and innovations which might lead to deviation from Thomistic line of thought (as in the case of Upadhyay) were not easily tolerated by the late nineteenth century Catholic Church. This Catholic intellectual climate is important to understand the way the Church hierarchy responded to Upadhyay’s methods.

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At the time when Upadhyay was struggling to find new ways of presenting Christianity in India, the Church in Europe was grappling with what is known as the 'Modernist Crisis.' Within the Catholic Church Modernism usually refers to that movement at the turn of the twentieth century which had the aim of bringing Catholic faith to closer relationship with the modern outlook in Scripture, philosophy, history and theology. Officially described as the 'synthesis of all heresies,' Modernism was formally condemned by Pius X by the decree Lamentabili (July 3, 1907) and the encyclical Pascendi (September 7, 1907). One of the leading figures of Catholic Modernism, Alfred Firmin Loisy (1857-1940), a French Biblical scholar, reached extreme historical skepticism regarding the origins of Christianity and the possibility of Christian revelation. Eventually, Loisy was excommunicated in 1908. Though Upadhyay's and Loisy's objectives and methods differed greatly, they shared a common concern, namely, to make Christianity intelligible in their respective cultural milieux. However, given the complexities involved in the socio-political domains and the intellectual atmosphere of the late nineteenth century, their efforts were seen more as threat to the unity of the Catholic Church than a help.

1.2 Nature and Scope of Upadhyay's Theology
In order to understand the nature of Upadhyay's theology we need to pay attention to what he was trying to do through his theological endeavors. The overarching framework of Upadhyay's writings reflects what is known in contemporary times as fundamental theology. As it is commonly understood today, fundamental theology is the theological discipline that reflects on the basis of Christian faith. It is in this sense that fundamental theology has been described as 'frontier' theology. Gerald O’Collins describes fundamental theology as 'that discipline which in the light of faith reflects critically on the foundations of theology and basic theological issues.'

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Modern fundamental theology grew out of the traditional Christian 'apologetics' understood as the defense of Christian doctrines and dogmas. In fact, Christian theology evolved from the apologetic literature of the Church Fathers from the second century onwards. Traditionally, Christian apologetics offered a reasoned defense of Christian faith. It was in the nineteenth century that the traditional apologetics transformed itself into fundamental theology with a view of providing the foundation for the Christian faith. If there is a key aspect emphasized by Upadhyay in his writings it is precisely about the need to establish a sound foundation for Christianity in India.

Brahmabandhab’s Hindu-Catholicism was about the foundations of Christian faith in the Indian context. The basic focus of fundamental theology is the rational grounding of the truth of faith and of the whole of theology. It deals with the possibilities of speaking about the realities of God, human beings and the world in a meaningful way. In short, fundamental theology focuses on the reasonableness and the ground of Christian faith. This aspect points to the very complex notions of meaning and truth which are distinct but closely related. Religious truths need to be interpreted in order to be meaningful. Fundamental theology focuses, among other things, on symbolically structured data of faith that are meaning-laden. From this perspective meaning and interpretation become a constitutive function of fundamental theology. David Tracy describes fundamental theology as a “philosophical reflection upon the meanings present in common human experience and language, and upon the meanings present in the Christian fact.” Fundamental theology helps to uncover the basic categories with which a systematic theology (dogmatic) can be developed. Hence, fundamental theology becomes the basis and foundation of theology. From this perspective, a philosophical grounding of fundamental theology is utterly necessary. Upadhyay’s efforts consist in finding ways and means of grounding Christian faith, which for him meant supernatural realm, on the natural platform of Hindu philosophical categories. Panikkar describes the scope of fundamental theology:

Fundamental theology, as commonly understood is a pre-theological or philosophical reflection on the foundations of theology. This reflection is directed either to justifying the assertions of Christian doctrine – which discipline is traditionally called apologetics – or to finding out the very sources and foundations of theology. The former proposes to be a rational or at least reasonable justification of the elements

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elaborated by theology; the latter claims to be a disclosure of the very basis of theological self-understanding.\textsuperscript{16}

The term ‘fundamental’ can have various meanings. It can mean basic or essential. Fundamental then deals with the basics or essentials of theology. Or fundamental can mean ground, support or basis as the foundations of a building provide the support for the entire structure. Fundamental theology then deals with the foundational basis or ground for theology.\textsuperscript{17} Though Upadhyay never used the term we cannot fail to see in his writings an effort to build a fundamental theology in India. The effort of Brahmabandhab entails two dimensions of fundamental theology: an apologetic dimension and a foundational dimension.

The first element in Upadhyay’s theological writings is the apologetic dimension. Soon after his conversion to Catholicism, Upadhyay began the defense of Catholic doctrines. He firmly believed that the Catholic Church alone possesses the truths necessary for salvation. Upadhyay’s apologetic writings are reflected in the way he defended the Catholic faith against the Protestants, Theosophy and Arya Samaj. Bhavani’s objective in studying ‘comparative religion’ in the pages of Sophia was clearly apologetic. The second noteworthy element in Brahmabandhab’s theological writings is the foundational aspect. He was interested in uncovering some of the foundational categories by which he hoped to make Christianity intelligible in India. From this point of view, Upadhyay’s contribution to fundamental theology is significant.

Upadhyay wrote consistently about the need of presenting Christian faith though Indian philosophical categories: “We have repeatedly said, and make bold to say again, that the religion of Christ will never be appreciated by the Hindus if it be not divested of its Greco-European clothing. It should be restated in terms of Vedanta before it can be properly intelligible to the Hindu mind.”\textsuperscript{18} Most of Upadhyay’s writings oscillate between Catholic and Vedantic-doctrines. His efforts consist in finding out the equivalent Catholic doctrines in Vedanta. He explores the possibilities of providing categories to Catholic theology in India


\textsuperscript{17} F. Schussler Fiorenza, “Fundamental Theology,” The New Dictionary of Theology, ed., J. A. Komonchak, M. Collins and D. A. Lane (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2003) 408.

\textsuperscript{18} B. Upadhyay “Notes [Divine Love and Justice],” Sp-W (September 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 143.
from classical Indian thought patterns and worldviews. He explored and analyzed various concepts and categories in both Catholic and Hindu traditions – concepts of God, Trinity, incarnation, sin, salvation, creation, *Brahman, varnasramadharma, karma, dharma, maya, avatara, avidya,* and *moksha.* Upadhyay wanted to re-state Christian truths in terms of Hindu categories and world-view.

What Upadhyay hoped to achieve was to present Christianity in terms of Hindu categories and modes of thought. Or in his own words, he wanted to ‘baptize the truths of Hindu philosophy and build them up as stepping stones to the Catholic faith.’[^19] He did admit the difficulties involved in such a project: “We have no definite idea as regards the *modus operandi* of making Hindu philosophy the handmaid of Christianity.”[^20] Upadhyay had a grand vision but in concrete terms Upadhyay’s explorations in this direction remained sporadic and intermittent. However limited the end results, it cannot be denied that Upadhyay did make some significant contribution to the wider theological foundations in the Indian context. Having outlined the scope and method of Upadhyay’s theology now let us focus briefly on his restatement of Catholic faith through Hindu categories.

### 2. Restatement of Divine Reality

Upadhyay spent considerable time and energy in clarifying for himself the notion of God. In fact soon after his baptism the idea of God was something that occupied much of his lectures and writings. Relying heavily on the Thomistic notion of God from the start, Upadhyay sought to create a bridge between Christianity and Hinduism to enunciate the idea of the Absolute. Though he found the Hindu notions of God unsatisfactory, beneath the layers of erroneous accretions Upadhyay found the notion of Theism as the bridge between Christianity and Hinduism. In this section we shall focus on three key dimensions of Upadhyay’s interpretation of the divine (1) the reality of God (2) Christology and (3) Trinity as *Saccidananda.*


2.1 Reality of God

Upadhyay's interpretation of the divine reality or God-reality is firmly rooted in a theistic and more particularly monotheistic, framework. He had brought out a pamphlet in 1893 entitled *A short treatise on the existence of God.* 21 Upadhyay's objective was to persuade educated Hindus with rational arguments and without the aid of scriptural proofs about the existence of God. This methodology which is usually termed as 'natural theology' tried to show the existence of a personal creator-God who is omniscient and omnipotent. Upadhyay used such a framework with the hope of creating a bridge between Hinduism and Christianity with 'rational theism' as a link or common ground between the two religious systems.

In 1894 Brahmabandhab superimposed the Thomistic notion of the 'Absolute Being' on Jesus' idea of God which he describes as 'sublime' doctrine. According to Upadhyay, Jesus' doctrine of absolute God consists in being 'blessed in himself for ever without being necessarily related to any external being, whose knowledge and love is satisfied in an eternal, necessary, interior relationship.' 22 It is important to note this conception of God because it underlay the whole of Upadhyay's theology and was the theological foundation of his subsequent attempt to equate Catholic/Thomistic natural theology with rational theism in the Hindu context. 23 Lipner describes Upadhyay rationale:

The truths of this theism could be arrived at by the natural light of reason; upon them the supernatural truths of Catholic teaching could be harmoniously superadded. Both kinds of truths were thus compatible because both stemmed from the same provident source, the one God worshipped by the Catholic Church. In short, rationalist theism would be a *preparatio evangelica,* i.e., a preparation for the reception of the Gospel of Christ. 24

Upadhyay had been grappling with the question of God quite for some time and the English Jesuits at Stonyhurst College had been instrumental in clarifying some of the issues raised by Upadhyay. For instance, Upadhyay had sought clarification from a well known neo-Thomist Jesuit named B. Boedder, regarding some finer points pertaining to natural theology through correspondence. He also corresponded with Fr. Jürgens, SJ regarding the 'proofs of God's

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23 Julius J. Lipner, *Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary,* 111.

existence.' Through these correspondences Upadhyay sought to clarify certain points pertaining to natural theology.

Upadhyay delivered a lecture at the Town Hall, Trichinopoly on 9th April, 1896 on the theme "The Infinite and the Finite." He points out that the Infinite who is ‘all-inclusive’ is the embodiment of all perfections: “Take all perfections together, all the gunas; combine them into one being, and take away the negation, you have there an idea of the Infinite Being.” Upadhyay describes the qualities of the Infinite as follows: “There is no limitation in the love which the Infinite possesses; it is transcendent love. He is perfectly satisfied in loving Himself. He is atmarām. He is not in need of being related to any other being.” In the lecture he quotes a mantra from the Upanishad regarding our knowledge of God. Upadhyay concludes the lecture as follows: “We live - or better, we have our being - in Him... We shall be happy in glorifying Him, Who is the source of all being and Who is the Father of us all.” The significance of this lecture consists in the fact that Upadhyay is trying (in 1896) to find ‘points of contact’ between Thomism and Hindu philosophy.

In January 1898 Upadhyay began his attempt at finding the commonalities between Christian and Vedantic categories. In an article entitled “An Exposition of Catholic belief as compared with the Vedanta,” he writes:

We purpose to show systematically, first, how far the Christian and Catholic religion agrees with the Vedanta and secondly, in what fundamental points the former is opposed to the former. We shall consider all the principal doctrines that concern the eternal welfare of man, viz., (1) the nature of Parabrahman (Supreme Being), (2) His

25 See, Letter written by Fr. Boedder. S.J., to Banerji, 5th January, 1893, from Stonyhurst College. This letter pertains to clarifications on the 'nature of God.'; Letter written by Fr. Boedder. S.J., to Banerji, on 26th February, 1893, from Stonyhurst College. This letter contains clarifications on Trinity; Letter written by Fr. Jürgens, S.J., to Banerji, on 26th March 1893, from Bombay. This letter deals with the proofs of God's existence. Source: Varia on Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Goethals Indian Library Achieves.

26 This lecture was later published as a tract. See, Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav, The Infinite and the Finite, Third Edition (Trichy: St. J. I. S. Press, 1918).


29 He writes: “There is a famous mantra in the Upanishad which I Quote... “It is not that I know Him not; it is not that I know Him.” i.e., I know Him as well as I know Him not. To say that He is unknowable is truth; to say that He is perfectly knowable is also true.” Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav, The Infinite and the Finite, Third Edition, 12.

relation with finite beings, (3) the destiny of man, (4) sin, and (5) salvation, from both Catholic and Vedantic points of view.\textsuperscript{31}

Upadhyay assures the readers of \textit{Sophia} that in expounding the Christian perspective he intends to follow the ‘unanimous judgment of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Catholic Church.’ Similarly, in representing the Vedantic doctrines he intends to follow ‘the great Sankara’ as the guide and authority.\textsuperscript{32} Now for the first time Upadhyay portrays God as \textit{Parabrahman} who is \textit{Saccidananda}:

\textit{Parabrahman} is the eternal being; no one else is eternal (V. Aitareya Upanishad I.1). He is \textit{sat} (positive being), \textit{chit} (intelligence) and \textit{anandam} (bliss). We can boldly and safely affirm that this Vedantic conception of the nature of the Supreme Being marks the terminus of the flight of human reason into the eternal regions. The Catholic belief is exactly the same. God is the eternal being; He is purely positive, for the particle ‘not’ cannot be predicated of Him. He knows Himself and reposes in Himself with the supremest complacency.\textsuperscript{33}

It is significant here to note that for Upadhyay, the ‘Catholic belief is exactly the same’ as the Vedantic conception of the Supreme Being. For Upadhyay, who follows Thomist philosophical framework, God is the First Cause and infinite which has no ‘parts’; God is that reality to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be subtracted.\textsuperscript{34} The philosophical reasoning behind it can be summarized as follows: anything which has parts in any way or is susceptible to being divided in some sense can never be infinite. God, for Upadhyay, is essentially self-contained, immutable and indivisible.\textsuperscript{35} Upadhyay writes:

Then there is only One Eternal Being who is the cause of all other beings. The \textit{Upanishads} declare along with reason; \textit{atma va idam eka evagra asit: nanyat kinchana mishat} [Ait. Upa. 1.1] (in the beginning there was only one being; nothing else existed). This \textit{mantra} (verse) contains the essence of the revelation given to man by God in the beginning – a revelation which has been disfigured and corrupted by

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{32} B. Upadhyay, "An Exposition of Catholic belief as compared with the Vedanta," J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU-I}, 19.
\item\textsuperscript{34} B. C. Banerji, \textit{A Short Treatise on the Existence of God} (Karachi: Victoria Press, 1893) p.1.
\end{itemize}
human perversity, but whose light is visible even in the darkest religion of the world, and on which is based the supernatural religion of the Catholic Church.\footnote{B. Upadhyay, "An Exposition of Catholic belief as compared with the Vedanta," J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 21.}

Let us note carefully what Upadhyay says here: (i) the \textit{mantra} quoted from the Upanishad contains God's revelation to human beings about the nature of the Eternal Being (ii) but this revelation has been corrupted in the subsequent development of Hinduism (iii) though corrupted the light of this revelation is present in Hinduism (iv) the light of this revelation is the basis for the supernatural religion of the Catholic Church. The theistic framework of Hinduism with its revelatory status becomes for Upadhyay the stepping stone for finding affinity and commonality with the supernatural religion, namely, the Catholic religion.

\subsection*{2.2 Christology}
Upadhyay's Christology is firmly rooted in traditional Catholic teaching. One of the favourite Christological themes of Upadhyay is the Vicarious Suffering of Christ. As far as the salvific role of Jesus is concerned, Upadhyay deals with the vicarious atonement of Christ in some detail.\footnote{See for example, B. Upadhyay, ""Bear Ye One Another's Burdens"", \textit{Sp-M} (June, 1898), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 175-181; B. Upadhyay, "Question and Answers [Vicarious Suffering]," \textit{Sp-W} (June, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 184-185; B. Upadhyay, "Question and Answers [The Atonement]," \textit{Sp-W} (June, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 185-187; B. Upadhyay, "[Doctrine of Atonement]," \textit{Sp-W} (June, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 187-188.} Responding to \textit{The Arya Messenger}'s charges against the Christian doctrine of atonement\footnote{Upadhyay quotes the remarks of \textit{The Arya Messenger} (23 March, 1898) on the doctrine of vicarious atonement: "Never was a more absurd doctrine fathered upon mankind than Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement....Reason and common sense say that whoever breaks the laws should suffer for it, but here are our Christian friends who say that it is not the breaker of the law that should suffer for his evil deeds, but a third party who had nothing to do with the breaking of the law. Fine ideas of justice have these Christians!" B. Upadhyay, ""Bear Ye One Another's Burdens"," \textit{Sp-M} (June, 1898), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 175.} Upadhyay, through lengthy arguments, shows that the Christian understanding of vicarious suffering and concomitant 'bearing one another's burden,' is a social quality of human beings. He argues that vicarious suffering and atonement of Jesus "perfectly accords with that peculiar character of man as forming one social body, by which the labours and sufferings and virtues of one may obtain pardon and blessings for others."\footnote{B. Upadhyay, ""Bear Ye One Another's Burdens"," J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 180.} He had already termed Christ as the 'perfect \textit{Narahari}' or God-man in 1898.\footnote{B. Upadhyay, "Are We Hindus," \textit{Sp-M} (July, 1898), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU}-I, 24.}
According to Upadhyay "Jesus Christ claims to have given to mankind the completest possible revelation of the nature and character of God, of the most comprehensive ideal of humanity, of the infinite malice of sin, and of the only universal way to release from the bondage of evil (avidya)." Upadhyay elucidates the Christian doctrine of incarnation though Hindu categories by pointing out the composition of human nature:

According to Vedanta, human nature is composed of five sheaths or division (kosha). They are: (1) physical (annamaya), which grows by assimilation; (2) vital (pranamaya); (3) mental (manomaya), through which are perceived relations of things; (4) intellectual (vijnanamaya), through which is apprehended the origin of being; and (5) spiritual (anandamaya) through which is felt the delight of the supreme Reality. These five sheaths are presided over by a personality (ahampratyayin) which knows itself.

Upadhyay points out that this 'self-knowing individual (jivacaitanya), is but a reflected spark of the supreme Reason (kutastha-caitanya), who abides in every man as the prime source of life and light.' According to Brahmabandhab, the 'time-incarnate divinity is also composed of five sheaths; but it is presided over by the person of the Logos himself and not by any created personality (aham).' He explains further the features of the incarnate Logos:

The five sheaths and the individual agent, enlivened and illuminated by divine reason, who resides in a special manner in the temple of humanity, make up man. But in the God-man the five sheaths are acted upon direct by the Logos-God and not through the medium of any individuality. The Incarnation was thus accomplished by uniting humanity with divinity in the person of the Logos. This incarnate God in man we call Jesus Christ.

Upadhyay calls Jesus, the Incarnate Logos, who was 'produced by divine samkalpa (will), the 'adipurusa of the spiritual world.' In the same article Upadhyay wrote a Sanskrit hymn in praise of the incarnate Logos. Although Upadhyay may not have worked out a comprehensive Christology, he did make some attempts in restating the meaning of Christ-Event in Hindu representational idioms.

3. Restatement of Trinity as Saccidananda

One of Upadhyay's significant contributions in finding Indic categories to express Christian truths consists in the restatement of the Christian notion of Trinity. He postulated advaita's Saccidananda as the Hindu conceptual basis for an understanding of the Trinity. In Advaita the Supreme Being was traditionally characterized as unchanging sat-cit-ananda or pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. As Gispert-Sauch has noted, the sat-cit-ananda 'formula does not occur as such in the classical Upanishads or the Gita, but its elements are found there in various meditations on Brahman. From the late medieval Upanishads, through bhakti literature and down to our own times we find Saccidananda as a designation of the Absolute used freely by all the cults.'\textsuperscript{46} Gispert-Sauch locates the genesis of Saccidananda formula as follows: "The birthplace of the formula is the Vedantic meditation on Brahman: The Ineffable Mystery underlying all reality is simultaneously existent (sat), consciousness (cit) and bliss (ananda). The three components are not "qualities" of Brahman but point to its very nature or svabhava."\textsuperscript{47}

3.1 Concept of Saccidananda: Antecedence

In the sixteenth century some of the missionaries working in India pointed out the resemblance of Hindu philosophical notion of sat-cit-ananda and the Trinity. For example, in 1549 the Jesuit Gasper Berze noted: "They have a trace of the Trinity which I think must have remained with them from the philosophers: the power is from the Father, the wisdom from the Son, and the Goodness from the Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{48} The actual credit for finding the correspondence between the notions of Saccidananda and the Christian idea of Trinity goes to Keshub Chunder Sen. In June 1881 at Lily Cottage (Sen's house) Sen used the Saccidananda formula for the baptismal ceremony of his Church of new Dispensation for the first time.\textsuperscript{49} In a lecture delivered on January 21, 1882, Sen described the notion of Saccidananda in the following manner:

\textsuperscript{46} G. Gispert-Sauch clarifies the use of Saccidananda formula: "The descriptive formula is equally applied to the Vedantic Brahman (e.g., Vedantasara 1), to Rama (e.g., Ramespurvatapaniya Up.5.8), to Siva (e.g., Tejobindu Up.3.11) and to the Goddess (e.g., by Sri Ramakrishna in the Kathamrtra)," G. Gispert-Sauch, "Gems from India: Saccidananda," in Vidyajyoti, Vol. 65, no. 8, August, 2001, p. 640.


\textsuperscript{49} After Sen anointed himself with flower-oil and went into the water and prayed: "'Glory unto the Father,' 'Glory unto the Son,' 'Glory unto the Holy Ghost.' To magnify the Three-in-one, he dipped once more, saying 'Blessed be SACCIDANANDA!' Truth, Wisdom and Joy in One!" Keshub Chunder Sen, "Excerpts from the
Divinity coming down to humanity is the Son; Divinity carrying up humanity to heaven is the Holy Ghost. This is the whole philosophy of salvation. How beautiful, how soul satisfying! The Father continually manifests His wisdom and mercy in creation, till they take the form of pure Sonship in Christ... God coming down and going up — this is creation, this is salvation. In this plain figure of three lines, you have the solution of a vast problem. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost; the Creator, the Exemplar, and the Sanctifier; I am, I love, I save; the Still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God; Force, Wisdom, Holiness; The True, the Good, the Beautiful; Sat, Chit, Ananda; 'Truth, Intelligence and Joy'.

Sen goes on to ask: "Has not the Holy Ghost been described as the 'Comforter'? Truly He is the heart's joy. Thus the Trinity of Christian theology corresponds strikingly with the Saccidananda of Hinduism." Sen goes on to clarify the nature of Saccidananda: "You have three conditions, three manifestations of Divinity. Yet there is one God, one Substance, amid three phenomena. Not three gods, but one God." According to Sen the Holy Spirit has not yet received the significance it deserves and his Church of the New Dispensation wanted to give prominence to the third person of the Trinity. In the same lecture Sen says: "The New Dispensation is true to the Father, true to the Son, and true to the Holy Ghost. Sat Chit Ananda is our motto. It shall be India's motto. Sat Chit Ananda was, is, and shall for ever be India's God." It must be noted that Keshub's doctrine of the Trinity was not elaborated and does not reflect the traditional Christian terminology.

3.2 Saccidananda: Upadhyay's Interpretation
Upadhyay's original contribution consists in forging a correspondence between the notion of Saccidananda and the Christian notion of Trinity within the framework of natural theology. We shall briefly note Upadhyay's delineation of 'sat' 'cit' and 'ananda' contained in

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338-41.


51 Keshub Chunder Sen, "That Marvelous Mystery-The Trinity," 228.

52 Keshub Chunder Sen, "That Marvelous Mystery-The Trinity," 228.

53 Sen says: "The Old Testament has sung Jehovah's glory, the New Testament has sung the praise of Jesus, the Son of God. Where is the scripture that sings the name of the Holy Spirit? Seek it, my friends, in the Church of the New Dispensation, which is in India. Judaism has taught us the Father; Christianity has taught us the Son; the New Church will teach us the Holy Ghost." Keshub Chunder Sen, "That Marvelous Mystery-The Trinity," 244.

54 Keshub Chunder Sen, "That Marvellous Mystery-The Trinity," 245.

55 Julius J. Lipner, Brahmapandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 191.
Saccidananda. Upadhyay reasons that the Parabrahman is immutable, eternal, self-subsisting and the only Sat: "What is Sat? It is a peculiarly Vedantic term. Its equivalent in English is "Being." That which is and cannot but be is Sat. The world is asat, not-sat, because it was not, is now, and may not be. Strictly speaking, the finite has no right to being. Parabrahman the eternal One, is the only Sat." In contrast, he describes the limited nature of the finite being: "A finite being is limited. To be limited is to be acted upon; to be acted upon is to be modified, for there can be no action without a resultant. Therefore the finite always passes from one mode of existence to another." Upadhyay posits the idea of an Infinite Being within the framework of being:

In the very concept of being is involved the idea of eternal existence. Conceive of a being and you cannot but conceive of an eternal, self-existent being. Deny that there can be any object which always is, and you will be compelled to admit the absurdity of existence proceeding from non-existence. If there exists no being from eternity but the perfect blank of nothingness, then there can never be any existence—unless nothing gives birth to something. But we see there are beings, therefore there must be an eternal Being.

Upadhyay points out that such a being is not subject to change either internally or externally because such a being 'must be in a state of actuality.' He further argues that a 'being whose essence and existence coalesce, that is, whose essence is an unmodifiable existence, whose duration cannot be divided into stages of a by-gone potentiality and a future actuality, is immutable.' Upadhyay says that such an eternal, immutable being is what Vedanta calls Parabrahman, the only Sat:

This eternal being is Sat. It has the reason of its existence within itself. Its being does not depend upon any other being. It is unrelated, absolute, absolved from the necessity of being allied to anything other than its own Self. It endures per se, without the help of any auxiliary. It is always what it is. From it comes to exist the phenomenal universe which was not, is now, and may not be. In it do all phenomena inhere and frolic and dance, like the wavelets in the ocean, in fanciful forms and colours, but without ruffling in the least the serene infinite bosom. "The Vedanta calls the eternal Being, Parabrahman, the only Sat, Om Tat Sat."
The second aspect of the Absolute Being or Parabrahman is ‘Cit’ which denotes consciousness and intelligence. Upadhyay explains the meaning of Cit in the following manner:

What is Cit? The radical meaning of Cit is ‘increasing,’ ‘growing,’ ‘becoming more.’ But the technical and usual meaning is ‘intelligence.’ By knowledge the knowing self or subject is duplicated in the known or the objective self. I am and I know that I am. One ‘I’ becomes more than one, grows into two ‘I’s by virtue of intelligence. Again, knowledge makes its object more than what it actually is.

Upadhyay points out that in the classical Hindu tradition exemplified in Upanishads and the Vedanta, the pure absolute is conceived as Intelligence. He writes:

Parabrahman, the supreme Being, is essentially Cit. For him to be is to know. It is written in the Upanishads that he grows by brooding (tapas) and his brooding is knowledge. He produces his self as Sabdabrahman (Logos) by ikshana (beholding). The knowing God is mirrored as the known God in the ocean of Cit. And by knowing himself he knows all possible varieties of particular beings contained in his universality. In the mystical and poetical language of the Upanishads he is said to multiply unity into variety by contemplating, by brooding upon the indivisible divine Essence, without breaking his substantial oneness.

The third aspect of the Absolute Being is Ananda or Bliss. Upadhyay describes the meaning of bliss or ananda: “What is bliss? It is the complacent repose of a being upon its own self or its like. The Infinite knows itself and naturally and necessarily takes delight in the objective self projected by thought.”

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62 As G. Gispert-Sauch points out, ‘The Real, the Existent, ‘does not just exist, but is necessarily conscious.’ Consciousness is the inner light which shines on and guides the soul to liberation. This is explained in the long discussion between king Janaka and theologian Yajnavalkya (BAU.4.3). Moreover, the Ultimate Reality is ‘the intelligent among intelligent things’ (cetanas cetananam), indeed ‘the wise who perceive him within themselves (atmasthanam), they alone, not others, enjoy unending peace’ (kath. Up. 5.13; cf also Svet. Up. 6: 13), G. Gispert-Sauch, “Gems from India: Cit,” Vidhyajyoti, Vol. 65, no. 7, July, 2001, p. 560.


64 Upadhyay explains: “The Upanishads and the Vedanta distinctly declare that the pure absolute is Intelligence. It is true that knowledge implies relation of subject and object, but it is irrational to deprive the supreme being of intelligence because human reason cannot find any adequate object of knowledge for the infinite Subject. It can be mathematically demonstrated that there can be no supreme Being without self-knowledge, though the mode of that knowledge is hidden from man’s understanding. It is on account of our natural inability to know how God makes his own Self the object of his cognition that his nature is described as inscrutable, reason as well as the Upanishads repudiate agnosticism.” B. Upadhyay, “Question and Answers: Cit,” Sp-W (August, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 142.


If the eternal Being finds no repose in its atman (self), then evidently it is wanting in completeness and perfection. But a deficient infinity is a contradiction. The Supreme Being reposes with infinite delectation on its perfection and is immutably satisfied with the harmony and beauty of itself. Not to attribute bliss to infinite intelligence is to affirm discord, dissimilarity, repulsion and moral separation between the infinite subject and the infinite object which are essentially one because there cannot be two infinities. The self-existent Being is Bliss.

Upadhyay’s Sanskrit Hymn ‘Vande Saccidanandam’ appeared in Sophia (monthly) on October 1898. In the explanatory note he writes:

The Sanskrit canticle is an adoration of that ancient Parabrahman, the Supreme Being, whose eternal acts finds, according to Catholic faith, an adequate resultant within his own Self, who is not obliged to come in contact with finite beings for the sustenance and satisfaction of his nature. His knowledge is fully satisfied by the cognition of the Logos, the infinite Image of his being, begotten by thought and mirrored in the ocean of his substance. His love finds the fullest satisfaction in the boundless complacency with which he reposes on his Image and breathes forth the Spirit of bliss. The canticle sings of the Father-God (Parabrahman), the Logos-God (Sabda-Brahman) and the Spirit-God (Svasita-Brahman), One in Three, Three in One.

Upadhyay may not have been the originator of Saccidananda as the Hindu equivalent of Christian Trinity, but he did play a significant role in elaborating and popularizing the formula among the Catholics. As Lipner points out, “Upadhyay’s originality lay in his attempt to show that sat, cit and ananda of classical Vedanta as a description of ultimate reality correspond more or less exactly to the understanding of the nature of God of Catholic natural theology, that is, neo-Thomistic reasoning about the essence of the divine being.”

4. Restatement of Human Reality

Upadhyay’s interpretation of human reality after his conversion to Catholicism reflects the nineteenth century Christian interpretation. In his later writings Brahmabandhab tries to retrieve Hindu notions about human reality which he thinks are compatible with Catholic beliefs. We shall focus on two key aspects of Upadhyay’s interpretation of human reality: (1) Human condition and (2) Human destiny.

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70 Julius J. Lipner, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary, 191.
4.1 Sin, *Karma*, and Human Condition

A significant element in Upadhyay’s interpretation of human nature is the notion of sin. Here Upadhyay defends the idea that the Hindu notion of sin is very similar to that of Christianity. He refutes the ideas of Vivekananda and Theosophists that ‘sin is not an offence against God.’ And that sin ‘is no breach of moral relationship with the Creator.’ He depicts pervasive and universal nature of sin as follows:

Sin is infinitely malicious in as much as it offends infinite goodness. It totally breaks our relationship with God; it makes us his enemy. And if the breach be not healed and reconciliation not affected, everlasting ruin and misery is sure to follow. This truth is as old as the foundations of the universe and woe be to him who denies it or suppresses it.

Upadhyay is keen to show that the traditional Hindu notion of sin is not different from the Christian understanding of it. To show the similarities of the notion of sin in Christianity and Hinduism, Upadhyay quotes three mantras from Rig Veda (7.86.3-5):

“O’Varuna! Being desirous of seeing thee I ask thee of that sin. I have enquired of wise men in various ways. They all have told me unanimously, ‘Varuna is angry with you.’ “O Varuna! What grievous sin have I committed that thou desirest to destroy thy devotee? O indomitable one! O glorious one! Reveal to me that sin that I may forsake it and surrender myself to thee and come to thee soon.” “Save me from the sins committed by my father or by me.”

He also quotes hymns 86, 88, and 89 of the seventh chapter of the *Rig Veda* in which Vasishtha, the Rishi acknowledges his sinfulness in a ‘spirit of self-accusation, submission, humility, confidence in God’s mercy and goodness, and acknowledgement of his sovereign power.’ Upadhyay points out that the Theosophists and Pantheists have ‘distorted reason and perverted the primitive belief of man about sin as represented in the Vedas.’ Further, Brahmabandhab points out that ‘no Hindu philosophy teaches that punishment of sin leads to salvation from the bondage of karma... Salvation comes, says the Vedanta, by true

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knowledge (jnana) and not by karma, even good karma, much less by the suffering entailed through evil deeds. Brahmabandhab interprets the dynamics of sin as follows:

The essence of sin lies in choosing the creature above the Creator, as an object of final and supreme bliss. As a necessary consequence the reason (viveka) is darkened. This spiritual blindness leads to separation from God, which is the punishment of sin and is far more painful to the soul than perpetual famishing without dying is to the body, for the soul is made to enjoy God alone.

Upadhyay fully agrees with the Catholic doctrine that though human beings are sinners, the saving grace of God is available to all. Upadhyay points out that this salvific grace is mediated through Jesus Christ. Though this saving grace is gratuitous, human beings need to cooperate with God for redemption. Upadhyay quotes St. Augustine to substantiate this point: ‘God has created us without our cooperation; but he will not save us without our cooperation.’ As far as the interpretation of human reality is concerned, one of the notions that Upadhyay restates in his writings is the Hindu notion of karma, which according to him, has been misrepresented:

According to Catholic Sāstra (Holy Writ) the law of Karma is “what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.” We are devout believers in this law. God is not deceived nor mocked, nor is he a respecter of persons. He rewards merit and punishes demerit without fail. Unfortunately, plagiarists and falsifiers, apostates from the primitive universal religion have perverted this holy law of karma.

According to Upadhyay the perversion consists in the ‘jump from the premise “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,” to the conclusion that a man reaps what he alone has sown.’ In Upadhyay’s opinion, the Hindu interpretation has overlooked the social dimension of karma as well as the reality of innocent suffering: “Man does, no doubt, reap whatsoever he sows, but he also reaps what is sown by his brother. In this consists the

solidarity of the human family that the members bear one another's burdens. The believers of the perverted law of *Karma* ignore the patent fact of innocent suffering.  

### 4.2 Moksha and Human Destiny

In agreement with traditional Catholic doctrine Upadhyay points out time and again that the final end of human beings is to see God face to face or to attain 'bliss beatific.' He describes the nature and scope of the final destiny of human beings:

> Catholic theologians hold that man's destiny is to know God as he is in himself. Our finite mode of knowledge can only apprehend God as manifested in and related to creatures. But God in his munificence has promised to illumine man with a light of glory by means of which he will be enabled to see him, face to face, and partake of the beatitude of his inner life.

Upadhyay further points out that such supernatural or transcendent knowledge can be attained only by supernatural means and this mediation is provided by Catholicism which is a supernatural religion. Upadhyay finds parallel to this transcendent destiny in Hindu ethos, though, as he points out, not all Hindu conceptions of human transcendent destiny is compatible with Christian conception of it. The closest to the Christian conception of the final destiny is that of the Advaita notion of *moksha* or salvation. Upadhyay explains moksha or salvation from the Catholic perspective:

> What is *moksha* or salvation? God-vision. To see God, face to face, without any intervening medium, to know his inner life which is full and complete without any correlation with the finite, to be nourished into perfection by feeding upon his substance, to be like him, to be one with him, is *moksha*. This is the Catholic idea of *moksha*.

According to Brahmabandhab the 'Vedantic conception of *moksha* being freedom from maya or nescience, is philosophically sound. Nescience is looking upon the finite as an entity independent of God, or handling it as one's permanent goal. To be liberated from *maya* is to know God as the absolute reality, the fount of all beings, the supremest end of life.' In his later writings Upadhyay uses the term *moksha* to express the Christian understanding of salvation. He describes the Catholic notion of *moksha* as follows: "What is *moksha* or

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salvation? God-vision. To see God, face to face, without any intervening medium, to know his inner life which is full and complete without any correlation with the finite, to be nourished into perfection by feeding upon his substance, to be like him, to be one with him, is moksha. This is the Catholic idea of moksha.\(^85\)

Within Hinduism there are various conceptions of moksha and Upadhyay rejects some of them: "The Samkhya conception of the supreme bliss of moksha is erroneous. According to this system bliss is only a negation of sorrow and not something positive."\(^86\) "The Vaishnava's moksha consists... in eternally serving God...Service cannot be the essence of beatitude. The contemplation of God which makes the soul put forth its fullest activity is the highest bliss. Service of God is only contingent to a saved soul."\(^87\) Upadhyay finds Vedantic notion of moksha as philosophically sound and acceptable: "The Vedantic conception of moksha being freedom from maya or nescience, is philosophically sound. Nescience is looking upon the finite as an entity independent of God, or handling it as one's permanent goal. To be liberated from his maya is to know God as the absolute reality, the fount of all beings, the supremest end of life."\(^88\)

In 1901 Upadhyay wrote an article titled "A Brief Outline of Hinduism," which, in his own words, is the result 'of a Christian's study of Hinduism.' Among several Hindu doctrines we find Upadhyay's interpretation of salvation as follows:

There can be no salvation through karma (deed) however good it may be. Salvation comes by knowledge. Freedom from death consists in the knowing of God. If one knows God Isvara only, he attains to a lower kind of salvation. He goes to Brahmaloka and sees the sagunam (related) God. But he who knows Brahman, the unrelated One, to be the only reality, and the cosmic multiplicity to be intrinsically nothing, attains oneness with God in bliss beatific.\(^89\)

In the above quoted passage Brahmabandhab seems to be differentiating different levels of salvation, namely lower and higher modes of salvation. At times it is difficult to know

whether Upadhyay is interpreting Hindu doctrine of salvation with Christian categories or whether he is expounding the Christian doctrine of salvation with Hindu categories. Upadhyay's Christian roots are reflected in expressions such as 'no salvation through deeds' and 'beatific bliss.'

Nowhere has he dealt explicitly with the question whether a non-Christian will be saved without the acceptance of Jesus Christ and the Church. He takes it for granted that salvation is possible only through Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. In 1894 he wrote: “The Catholic Church alone, as taught by her divine master reveals to man his right to the supreme blessings of immediate God-vision...She alone knows this truth of the supernatural destiny of man revealed to her by God and she alone can teach the way how to attain it." In this regard Upadhyay is firmly in the exclusivist camp. However, Upadhyay also maintains, on the other hand, that Hindu tradition does have sublime truths. By parity of reason Upadhyay seems to imply that the truths contained in Hindu tradition offer possibilities of salvation, albeit of a lower kind. As he has indicated there are levels of salvation and for him, one attains the fullness of salvation when one attains 'oneness with God in bliss beatific.' At this point Upadhyay seems to be suggesting some sort of unity between the Christian and Hindu notions of salvation.

5. Restatement of the ‘World’
Integral to Upadhyay’s interpretation of reality is his views on the ‘world.’ Christian tradition holds the view that God created the world and that through Creation we do get glimpses of the Divine. Within the framework of a personal God, Christianity believes that God cares for the world through providence. One of the key issues in Hindu philosophical system consists in the relationship of the Infinite or the Absolute to the world and various Hindu systems have come up with different solutions to the problem. As we have seen before Brahmabandhab’s thinking on Hinduism and Hindu philosophy had undergone considerable changes. In 1898 Upadhyay opts for the Vedantic monism as far as the relationship between the Absolute and the phenomenal world is concerned. Two key ideas which reveal his views on the ‘world’ are (1) the relationship between the Absolute and the phenomenal world and (2) the doctrine of maya.

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5.1 The Absolute and Phenomenal World

In 1894 Upadhyay was critical of the Hindu notion of the Absolute Being and its relation to the world: "Hinduism teaches that there is one undivided essence which apparently becomes many, that the state of its becoming many is this creation."\(^91\) Here Upadhyay has the Advaita position in mind, indicated by 'apparently' in the italic. He then contrasts the Hindu notion with what he calls 'pure reason,' which for all practical purposes is Thomism for Upadhyay: "Pure reason teaches that there is one eternal immutable Being who is the First Cause of all things visible and invisible, and who has brought them into existence by his almighty power."\(^92\) He goes on to suggest that the "Hindu theory that this creation is the transmutation of the eternal Being is opposed to reason. There can be no change in the First Cause. The First Cause must be necessarily immutable, otherwise it cannot be the First Cause."\(^93\)

Prior to 1898 Upadhyay is highly critical of the Advaita notion that 'God is not distinct from his creature — that God is all and all is God.'\(^94\) But gradually he sought to reinterpret the relation between the Absolute and the created order using the Hindu categories. For instance, in 1897 Upadhyay tries to show that the \textit{Arya Messenger} has not understood the meaning of creation in the right sense.\(^95\) For Upadhyay, the Rig Vedic idea of creation bears close resemblance to the Christian notion of Creation. He writes:

The Arya Samajists, who make it a point to pin their faith upon the Vedas, would do well to study the Rgveda, the oldest and most important of them, with greater care, without bringing to the interpretation of its \textit{mantras} the conceptions of later pantheistic systems. From the passages of the Rgveda, in which now this god now that god is the starting point, it is clear that the Rig Vedic understanding of creation is different from the Christian concept of creation.\(^96\)

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\(^95\) Upadhyay defends the Christian notion of creation against Arya Samajists. \textit{Arya Messenger} questioned the Christian doctrine of creation, which Upadhyay quotes in \textit{Sophia}: "This doctrine (of creation) is manifestly wrong, because it is contrary to the teaching of nature, wherein we never see anything produced anything, nor the falling away of anything into nothing. Annihilation of anything is absolutely unknown to Nature, and the developing into something of nothing whatever is naught. If God means that we should learn lessons from nature, then surely the doctrine of the Christians on Creation deserves to be discarded and given up once for all." Quoted by B. Upadhyay, "The Teachings of Nature regarding Creation," \textit{Sp-M} (May 1897), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU-I}, 210.
that god, is said to have made the world, it appears more probable that those ancient Aryans considered God to be a Creator in the Christian sense of the word.\(^96\)

Upadhyay inverts the argument of the *Arya Messenger* by showing that the most important scripture of Arya Samaj, namely, the Vedas, contains notions of Creation which has close resemblances to that of Christianity.

By 1898 Upadhyay had restated the Christian Trinity in terms of Vedanta: Father-God (*Parabrahman*), the Logos-God (*Sabda-Brahman*) and the Spirit-God (*Svasita-Brahman*).\(^97\) He retains the idea of the immutability of the Absolute and seeks ways to interpret the problem of the ‘one and many’ and the relation of the Absolute Being to the world. In 1898 he wrote that from the Eternal Being (Sat) ‘comes to exist the phenomenal universe which was not, is now, and may not be.’\(^98\) Here Upadhyay hints at the contingent nature of created order. Upadhyay also suggests in his interpretation of ‘Cit’ that the Supreme Being brings forth the created order out of his freedom. He writes: “The creative act, by which God manifests his unity in variety, is purely an outcome of freedom, of choice.”\(^99\)

Upadhyay sought to resolve the problem of the relation of the Absolute to the phenomenal world by using the Vedantic principle of *nirguna* and *saguna* and the notion of *sat-cit-ananda*. He points out that “Brahman, the supreme Being per se, is *nirguna*, that is, he possesses no external attributes, no necessary correlation with any being other than his infinite self.”\(^100\) He explains: “He [Brahman] is *sat* – existing by himself; he is *cit* – self-knowledge himself without any external intervention; he is *ananda* – supremely happy in his self-colloquy. But looked at from the standpoint of relation, he is *saguna*, he is *Iswara*, creator of heaven and earth, possessing attributes relating him to created nature.”\(^101\) As *saguna*, the supreme Being’s “self-knowledge (*cit*) is then manifested as mind, knowing the

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universe and making designs for its preservation and perfection." Further in this saguna state, His 'bliss (ananda) shines as Love and takes delight in creatures made after his likeness, repudiates all individuals whose character is unlike his own, and banishes the evil and deformed ones from the horizon of his cognizance. Upadhyay clarifies the attribute of nirguna as follows:

The supreme Being is called Nirguna in Vedanta. The word literally means 'having no attributes.' Hence it is at once concluded that the God of Vedanta is an impersonal, abstract, unconscious Being. Even European theosophists who are great admirers of the Hindu religion, have fallen into this error. Nirguna means that the attributes which relates the Infinite to the finite are not necessary to his being. For example, Creatorhood is not an intrinsic attribute of the divine Nature.

Following his Christian principles Upadhyay refuses to identify creature with the Creator. According to him, 'no sin is blacker than that of identifying a creature with the Creator.'

5.2 The Absolute and the World: Maya
The second key aspect of Upadhyay's understanding of the 'world' is maya which has a bearing on the relationship between the Absolute and the Created order. He says that the term maya is a much misunderstood term. Upadhyay writes: "Maya is what St. Thomas calls "creatio passiva"- passive creation. It [creatio passiva] is a quality of all that is not Brahman, and is defined by the Angelic Doctor as the "habitude of having being from another and resulting from the operation" of God. Upadhyay describes Maya in the following manner:

Maya is a mysterious divine operation; it is neither real nor unreal... It [maya] cannot be real in the sense of its being essential to the divine nature, because Brahman is self-sufficient and cannot be said to be under the necessity of being related to the finite. Nor is it unreal, for by maya comes to exist the finite which possesses being.

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106 He writes: The doctrine of maya, we are afraid, has been greatly misunderstood, misrepresented and misapplied., The mischief has arisen from looking at it through the medium of its English equivalent 'illusion' which conveys only its secondary meaning. The current anglicised view of the doctrine will, we think, have to be considerably revised." B. Upadhyay, "Question and Answers: Creation and Maya," Sp-M (June, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 218.
though not essentially — the essence of the finite not being identical with its existence. From an unreality nothing can proceed. Maya is neither real or necessary, nor unreal, but contingent.\textsuperscript{108}

Upadhyay defends the Vedantic doctrine of \textit{maya} against the allegation that it suggests the notion of ‘the world as a dream’ and illusion. He points out that in Vedanta we can see two views regarding the world: On the one hand Vedanta says ‘that the world is not a dream, and this on the ground that there is an essential difference between the nature of the dream-world and that of this external world of ours.'\textsuperscript{109} On the other hand ‘the world is repeatedly compared in the Vedanta, both by Sankara and Vyasa, to a dream.’ Upadhyay offers a way out of this paradox as follows:

> When we have a dream we imagine the objects and events we dream about to be possessed of independent existence, whereas they are merely the product of our brain. In like manner, when perceiving this external world through the senses \textit{we imagine it to be an independent reality}, existing by itself and not as the product of the divine Mind and Will, then verily our perception of the world may be fitly styled a dream. And it is exactly in this sense and only to this extent that the Vedanta likens the world to a dream.\textsuperscript{110}

Upadhyay insists that according to Vedanta the world has an objective existence and that it never argues the illusory nature of finite beings:

> The material world has an objective, extra-mental existence. It is as real as the human mind. But mind and matter are both called illusory, by the Vedanta, not because they are deceptive shadows, but because we foolishly and wickedly attribute to them independent, underived existence. We handle them as if they were self-existent, complete, perfect beings. This perverted and false appearance of nature, which is a creation of our stupid and evil fancy is called illusory, and not nature itself.\textsuperscript{111}

He points out that \textit{maya} ‘is the fecund power (sakti) which gives birth to multiplicity. This fecundity is called \textit{maya} because its character is inscrutable. It is eternal but its operation is


\textsuperscript{109} He writes: “The former [dream] is utterly wanting in coherence, while the latter is characterized by persistent coherence.” B. Upadhyay, “Question and Answers: \textit{Maya},” \textit{Sp-W} (23 June, 1900), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, \textit{TWBU-I}, 219-220.


not essential to the being of God.\textsuperscript{112} Upadhyay points out the parallelism between Thomism and Sankara: “The explanation given by St. Thomas of the creation of the universe as the overflow of divine being out of abundance is in accord with the Vedantic doctrine of \textit{maya}. He, as well as the Vedanta, teaches that creatures are by themselves darkness, falsity and nothing. Their being is only a reflection caught from the \textit{brahman}.”\textsuperscript{113} Further he points out that Thomism ‘is one with Sankara in regard to the philosophy of the absolute being and its contingent relation to the finite.’\textsuperscript{114} For Upadhyay the world is real and concrete and is the result of the creative act of God. We see Upadhyay trying to re-state Christian truths in terms of Vedantic categories. He writes: “The idea of re-stating Christianity in terms of the Vedanta can only grow in strength by being thoroughly sifted and analyzed.”\textsuperscript{115}

6. Inclusivism of Upadhyay’s Restatement
Upadhyay did not consciously build a theology of religions as we understand it today. A theology of religions is implicitly present in his articulation of the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism. Our effort here is to sift through those aspects which deal with the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism and bring out the implicit theology of religions of Upadhyay. In other words our objective is to make explicit what is implicit, what lies scattered throughout Brahmabandhab’s writings about theology of religions. We must remember that he was doing this at a time when the general attitude of Catholicism toward other religious traditions was not one of openness.

6.1 Christianity and Other Religions
Up until the Second Vatican Council the official Catholic position regarding the relationship between the Church and non-Christian religions can be described in terms of exclusivism. Exclusivism, which sees Christian revelation as final and ultimate, denies the possibility of salvation in non-Christian traditions. Gavin D’Costa describes exclusivist paradigm as follows: “The exclusivist paradigm has been characterized as maintaining that other religions are marked by humankind’s fundamental sinfulness and are therefore erroneous, and that

Christ (or Christianity) offers the only valid path to salvation. Exclusivists maintain that all salvation requires an explicit faith in Jesus Christ and that the followers of religious traditions other than the way preached by Christ cannot be saved.

However, the Second Vatican Council brought significant changes in the way the relationship between Christianity and non-Christian traditions are viewed. This Council marks a paradigm shift in the approach to the non-Christian religions in the sense that it initiated a process by which the exclusivist perspective gave way to a perspective which came to be known as inclusivism. Gavin D'Costa describes inclusivist paradigm as follows: “This approach has been characterized as one that affirms the salvific presence of God in non-Christian religions while still maintaining that Christ is the definitive and authoritative revelation of God.”

Inclusivist paradigm tries to maintain the balance between two biblical axioms: (1) the operation of grace of God in various religious traditions and at the same time (2) the unique manifestation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, which makes a universal claim as the final way of salvation. Allan Race clarifies this paradigm as follows:

Inclusivism in the Christian theology of religions is both an acceptance and rejection of the other faiths, a dialectical 'yes' and 'no.' On the one hand it accepts the spiritual power and depth manifest in them, so that they can properly be called a locus of divine presence. On the other hand, it rejects them as not being sufficient for salvation apart from Christ, for Christ alone is saviour.

Inclusivists maintain that the saving grace of God can reach human beings through non-Christian traditions. If the exclusivist paradigm results in the confrontation of religious traditions by the finality of Christian revelation, the inclusivist paradigm avoids such confrontation. The Inclusivist paradigm tries to discern ways in which non-Christian traditions may be integrated into Christian theological reflection.


118 See, the declaration of the Council, NA in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed., Walter Abbot (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972)


Christian approach to other religious traditions is also linked to the question of salvation. For several centuries the official Church’s position stated that an explicit faith in Jesus Christ was required in order to be saved. To put it differently the traditional Church position consisted in the view that non-Christians would not be saved since they did not profess an explicit faith in Jesus Christ. An important aspect intrinsically related to the question of grace through Christ, which has a long history, is the possibility of salvation for non-Christians. An additional requirement for salvation consisted in the membership in the Church which is summed up in the famous axiom ‘Outside the Church no salvation,’ which is usually associated with the name of Saint Cyprian. Several Church councils had reiterated this position. The declaration of the General Council of Florence (1442) states:

[The holy Roman Church]... firmly believes, professes and preaches that “no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews, heretics or schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the ‘eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25: 41), unless before the end of their life they are received into it.”

This exclusivist position almost entirely ruled out any need of studying other religious traditions since it set aside the possibility of salvation for non-Christians in an *apriori* fashion. Within the Catholic tradition the change of attitude towards other religious traditions occurred only gradually. Against this background our study would like to suggest that Upadhyay’s implicit theology of religions which is embedded in his Hindu-Catholicism marks what might be called proto-inclusivist position or a midway position between exclusivism and inclusivism. Perhaps this proto-inclusivism may be considered as the most important contribution of Upadhyay.

**6.2 Upadhyay’s Theology of Religions**

Soon after his conversion to Catholicism, Upadhyay was firmly rooted in the ‘exclusivist’ school of thought. Though his attempt is to ‘cull Theistic truths from Hindu scriptures’ Upadhyay wants to ‘show the utter falsity of the prevailing Hindu error of Advaitavad

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Moreover, "[o]ur attitude towards Hinduism is that of an impartial friend who is anxious to find out what is true and good in object of friendship and abjure what is false and evil." As he is writing these lines in 1895 he sounds like an exclusivist. But we need to note the gradual transition taking place in his theological perspectives. In 1898 we see one of the clearest and closest formulations of a theology of religions by Upadhyay:

The Catholic Church teaches that the light of God enlightens everyman that comes into the world. She teaches, moreover, that God vouchsafed to man in the beginning a revelation of His will for the guidance of the whole human race. This primitive religion is the foundation on which stands the new supernatural revelation of the Catholic Church. Other religions, even the most corrupt ones, have also inherited more or less the truth of this ancient Theism. It is no wonder then that there should be similarities between the Hindu and Christian scriptures. The similarity exists not because of derivation of one from the other, but because of the connection of both with the primitive religion.

For Upadhyay, theistic traditions including primitive theism reflect elements of truth. These elements of truths in various traditions, for him, are precisely the springboards of 'elevation' and of 'regeneration.' Catholicism for Upadhyay is marked by the 'Divine Origin' which makes it the supernatural religion. He was also equally convinced that 'God has established one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' and 'there is no salvation outside this Church.'

According to Upadhyay, 'the Christian missionary should cheerfully acknowledge the good things of Hinduism and take at their fullest possible value its many noble aspirations.' Further, Brahmabandhab points out that,

"[T]he truths which Hinduism possesses are all such as are attainable and as a matter of fact have been attained by the aid of mere human reason assisted in a manner by Divine grace, whereas Christianity stands on an absolutely different pedestal, in that it is purely a Divine revelation the truth of which is attested by the unmistakable seal of tangible and visible Divine acts."

123 This is written before his conversion to Sankara's Advaita. B. Upadhyay, "Our Attitude towards Hinduism," Sp-M (January 1895), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 6.


127 B. Upadhyay, "Dr. Barrows in India," Sp-M (February 1897), J. Lipner and G. Gispert-Sauch, TWBU-I, 16.

It is against the backdrop of the distinctions made between supernatural religion and natural religion and between Samaj dharma and Sadhan dharma that we need to locate Upadhyay’s theology of religions. Equally important in his theology of religions are his interpretations of truth, the idea of Catholic development and the notion of salvation.

6.3 Proto-Inclusivism of Upadhyay

Upadhyay is very much aware of the official position of the Catholic Church regarding its relationship with other religious traditions, for he writes: “Certainly, those Christians who see nothing but darkness in non-Christian lands are to be denounced. The Catholic Church has officially condemned the heresy which holds that the Spirit of God does not work outside the Church.” In his Allocution *Singulari Quadam* (1854) Pope Pius IX made a clear distinction between the objective necessity of the Church for salvation as willed by God, and the subjective guilt or innocence of people outside the Church.” In this Allocution Pius IX stated that ‘outside the apostolic Roman Church no one can be saved.’ The pope adds immediately: “on the other hand, it must likewise be held as certain that those who live in ignorance of the true religion...are not subject to any guilt in this matter before the eyes of the Lord.”

What we do have in the nineteenth century official Catholic documents pertains to the subjective innocence of people outside the Church. In the nineteenth century and in the early decades of the twentieth century we do not yet have official Catholic documents which endorsed an inclusivist position. It is only with the Second Vatican Council that we see a clearly stated official Catholic inclusivist position.

Against such official position let us focus on Upadhyay’s understanding regarding the status of non-Christians. In the years which followed soon after his conversion to Catholicism, Upadhyay held the traditional catholic axiom that ‘there is no salvation outside the church.’ This he made clear while he articulated the objectives of *Sophia* in 1896: the aim of *Sophia* is to “show that Almighty God has established one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of which the Apostolic See of Rome is the centre; that there is no salvation outside this Church.” However Upadhyay adds immediately a significant note to this axiom: “One is who

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externally separated from the Catholic Church but is in good faith is united with it internally by the conformity of his will to the Divine will.\textsuperscript{132}

Let us note carefully what has been affirmed by Upadhyay. In the first place he makes a distinction between 'external' and 'internal' in terms of non-Catholic's relationship to the Church. Accordingly, a non-Catholic may be separated from the Catholic Church externally, but that person is still united with the Catholic Church internally if he conforms himself/herself to the Divine will. In other words, what Upadhyay seems to be suggesting is this: Though those who are not formal members of the Catholic Church are still in some way united to it if they do the will of God. To put it differently, those who seek and do the will of God, though they are not the formal members of the Catholic Church, are somehow related to it. Non-Catholics, insofar as they do the will of God, implicitly belong to the Church. Upadhyay's statement is strikingly similar to the statement made nearly sixty years later by the Second Vatican Council.\textsuperscript{133} Perhaps this is the first glimpse of inclusivism that we find in the nineteenth century Catholic theology in India. It is against such background this study terms Upadhyay's approach to non-Christian religions as 'proto-inclusivism.'

This view of Upadhyay seems to be a significant departure from the prevailing official position of his time. To understand Upadhyay's departure we need to carefully delineate the nuances of the official positions of the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century. As we have already noted, Singulare Quadam (1854) of Pope Pius IX absolves the subjective guilt of those who are outside the fold of the Catholic Church. But we do not have any nineteenth century or earlier official documents which suggest that non-Christians may belong to the Catholic Church if they strive to do the will of God. Upadhyay seems to have located non-Christian religious traditions implicitly within the matrix of the universal salvific will of God.

We had already noted Upadhyay's position regarding salvation. He was firmly convinced that Jesus Christ is the only saviour of mankind. However, Upadhyay's approach to salvation


\textsuperscript{133} The Dogmatic Constitutions on the Church (LG) states: "Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience." LG #16. \textit{The Documents of Vatican II,} ed., Walter Abbot.
from the Hindu-Christian perspective brings in a novel dimension. He distinguishes between different levels of salvation, namely lower and higher level of salvation. According to Upadhyay, at a lower level of salvation we see God as Iswara; at the highest level we attain oneness with God in bliss beatific, namely we see God face to face. Implicit in this important distinction is Upadhyay’s affirmation that salvation may be achieved by non-Christians as well as Christians and the difference consists in the matter of degree.

In order to understand Upadhyay’s inclusivism in the right perspective we need to locate it within his overall objective of Hindu-Catholic synthesis. His objective, it may be recalled, was to provide a natural platform to re-state supernatural truths of Catholicism and this natural platform for Upadhyay was through the theistic categories of Advaita Vedanta. He insisted on the need for such a foundation in the following words: “Theism is the preamble of faith and it will be unwise to attempt to build up the structure of the supernatural religion of Christ before the solid foundation of Theism is properly laid.” For Brahmabandhab, Theistic truths of Hinduism as reflected in the Advaita Vedanta are the stepping stones to re-state Catholic faith in the Indian context.

We need to keep in mind the fact that Upadhyay was articulating an inclusivist position when the prevailing theological position was firmly rooted in exclusivism, which might explain at least in part, the way the Catholic hierarchy responded to him. We must also remember that Upadhyay tried to articulate a form of inclusivism, which we call proto-inclusivism, nearly half a century before Karl Rahner popularized it though his famous notion of ‘Anonymous Christian’ and the Second Vatican Council made it its official position to describe Catholicism’s relation to non-Christian religious traditions. Upadhyay’s theology of religions and his Catholic inclusivism may be considered as his chief contribution to Indian Christian theology.

**Conclusion**

Upadhyay’s theology emerges basically from his efforts to translate Christian worldview into Hindu worldview by using classical Indian categories. His theological method is located in what is usually referred to as natural theology or philosophical theology which emphasizes

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human reason in investigating God and human realities. Natural theology seems to have appealed to Upadhyay since 'reason' could be used as the common platform between Christianity and Hinduism. As far as the nature and scope of Upadhyay's theological enterprise is concerned, it belongs to the field of inquiry known today as fundamental theology. Fundamental theology, apart from reflecting critically on the foundation of theology, also focuses on the possibilities of speaking about the realities of God, human being and the world in a meaningful way. It is this 'meaningful' way of presenting Catholic faith that had gripped Brahmabandhab's theological imagination. For him this meant, among other things, utilizing categories and thought patterns of India. It is against this background that we need to understand Upadhyay's efforts in articulating the realities of God, humans and the world.

Firstly, the reality of God/Infinite/Absolute receives the prime place in his efforts in restating Catholic faith. Right from the start he used Thomistic categories to enunciate the nature of the Infinite Being in terms of immutability, unity, intelligence, and self-sufficiency. In the later stages he chose to describe God in terms of Vedantic categories. He also made an effort to restate Christology using Indian philosophical categories and this effort focused on the Christian notion of incarnation. He described Jesus as Narahari or God-man and as Adipurusa. Particularly noteworthy is his description of God as Saccidananda.

Secondly, Upadhyay also tried to restate human reality by finding common grounds between Hinduism and Christianity. The basic categories of his Christian interpretation of human nature are derived from Thomism. Throughout his writings Upadhyay maintained the distinction between the Absolute (Creator) and human beings. He also emphasized the social nature of human beings and pointed out the need to 'bear one another's burdens.' One important aspect in which he differed from some of his contemporary Hindu thinkers regarding the Human condition pertains to the notion of sin. Brahmabandhab maintained, following his Christian faith, that human propensity to sin is a basic human orientation rooted in freedom. At the same time he also maintained the availability of grace which is capable of elevating human beings from their sinful condition. An important aspect of Upadhyay's restatement on human condition is the doctrine of Karma which he interprets predominantly in social terms.
Thirdly, Upadhyay sought to restate Christian ideas pertaining to the 'world' in terms of classical categories. Here the question addressed by Upadhyay is the problem of the 'One and many' or the relationship of the Absolute to the created order. He finds points of contact between St. Thomas and Sankara regarding the relationship between the Infinite and the world. One of the categories used by Brahmabandhab to find a solution to the problem is by applying the notion of *Saccidananda*. The created order comes into existence, according to Upadhyay, out of the creative freedom of the Absolute. In order to enunciate the Absolute's relation to the world he utilizes the distinction between *nirguna* and *saguna* aspects of the Brahman. An important aspect of his restatement regarding God's relationship to the world is *maya* which he interprets as the 'fecund' power of the Absolute. He also restates *maya* in terms of contingency of creation; he states that *maya* is neither real or necessary, nor unreal, but contingent.

Fourthly, through his restatement of Christian faith and identity he spelt out a theology of religions. It is within the framework of providing a natural foundation to the supernatural religion of Christianity that we need to situate Upadhyay's proto-inclusivist theology of religions. It seems reasonable to suggest that no other Catholic theologian in India had propounded such a view at the tail end of the nineteenth century. From this point of view, Upadhyay may be considered as the first Indian Catholic theologian who articulated a proto-inclusivist position in the theology of religions. This contribution of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay has not received the attention which it rightly deserves.