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RADHAKRISHNAN

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(An Introduction)

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BHAVNA PRAKASHAN

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Introduction

It was some time in the beginning of the year 1984 when I happened to meet a number of young students of Modern Indian History and Political Science making frantic efforts to locate some material for the details of Life & Activities of late Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. It was not readily available.

This immediately prompted me to write an article so that the immediate need of those students could have been met. The first two Chapters of this booklet are that article.

I was not happy with my performance. I have written the next four Chapters to supplement the same.

As soon as the manuscript is complete, my dissatisfaction has increased still further. I have failed to do justice with this great Son of India. If given a chance, I would still wish to write a more comprehensive book.

Of late, I have seen a few books describing various aspects of his life. People have wrested Ph. D. Degrees from different Universities just by interpreting small parts of his total personality.

This booklet is, however, not for Scholars & Specialists. They would feel disappointed with its contents. It would, however, meet the requirements of a common reader.

Since the book was not planned at one time, some repetition of details in the Scheme is inevitable. Still every effort has been made to go straight into the minds of young readers so that they may grasp the "Spirit of the man".

In the end, I would thank Shri T. Ranganathan who has looked into the manuscript and even the proofs as soon as these were being received from the Press.

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M.L. DHAWAN

Chapter I

Biographical (I)

In 1857, remnants of the armed forces of feudal India collected under the banner of certain disgruntled or patriotic princes and fought their last battle against the well organised army of the East India Company. The defeat of the said princes was written on the wall, since the native forces were neither aware of the details of the historic significance of their cause nor had been that suitably equipped to meet the challenge.

They were just making desperate attempts to save their territories or say get themselves finished in the struggle as heroes and heroines. That was all.

Indians by and large, were clear that the British Raj had come to stay and perpetuate. It had seldom been in the history of Indian people to raise strong united armies and fight out bloody battles. They had other priorities of life whose relevance is acknowledged even in our times and that too by those who have foresight and instinct of things. Here, the people had demonstrated time and again, that even if they were defeated in the battle fields, they would somehow retain certain characteristics of liberty. They possessed some inside strength that had kept them moving on even under the most trying circumstances.

It had also been around 1857, a new India was emerging unseen and unnoticed since its clear shape could not be anticipated. Men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chander Sen, Ram Krishna Param Hansa, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Daya Nand Saraswati and others had felt the pulse of the nation and predicted that the possibilities of the National Resurgence were round the corner. They did not call upon the people to raise armies and decide their futurity in the battle field, rather diverted the attention of their era to the ground work for creating the situation in which the foundations of new India could be

quietly laid. Gradually their influence was acknowledged all around. The founders of new India began to see light of the day. Vivekananda was born in 1863, Tilak in 1856, Tagore in 1861, Aurbindo in 1872, Iqbal in 1873, and Gandhi in 1869. They were all tall men of their times who gave a great push to the Indian history. A process was set in and as good luck would have it, they were succeeded by not lesser celebrities in the decades to come. Sardar Patel was born in 1875 Maulana Azad in 1888, Nehru in 1889, Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1884 and Dr. Radhakrishnan on 5th September 1888. They were all men of great qualities of head and heart.

A human child is born in the stream of existence. His parents are already there. They straightaway determine the religion, caste, region, and so many characteristics of the new born and label him accordingly. Then there is an important role of genetics. Radhakrishnan as a child was not an exception.

Tirutani was the place of his birth. This small township is just at the distance of forty miles from Madras. He was the second child of his parents. His father was a priest as well as a teacher. The life at home was simple, pious, religious and had tilt towards orthodoxy. Tirutani was a dormant place in the evening of the nineteenth century like many other hundred thousands of places in India. People were living there unconcerned as to what was happening all over the country as well as in the world. Ideas of modernisation could not be conceived in that milieu. Western influences were, of course, prowling the metropolitan cities like Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore and Delhi, but at other places the old order was well entrenched. The serious religious discourses had, of course, not been there in towns like Tirutani. The people were by and large conservative. The question of their raising the brows in the matters of theology and social life did not arise. They had no will to look into the things. The life on the whole was just a stagnant pool. Who had the courage to look into the relevance of religious traditions? These were divinely ordained.

There was no dissatisfaction against the orthodoxy or conservatism or social inequality, or economic disparity since the social and religious order was in tact. A society of this kind could not have thought of throwing up martyrs or rebels for re-shaping new India. So, here a child however, gifted and

brilliant he might be, could not have acquired sensational revolutionary characteristics.

In the initial stages every human child has to borrow quite a lot from the life around. This is something unavoidable. So, during the formative period prevailing religious ideas, beliefs, values biases and aspirations, all work to form a credo of young ones. The age of critically examining things comes much after and by that time a young human being is more or less conditioned.

Radhakrishnan carefully avoided to discuss about his childhood and we did not know much of that. Others have also avoided to write much on the issue. Even when he had grown up and acquired a distinguished station in life, he refused to discuss the details of his early life. When the Tudor Publishing Company, New York decided to publish the prestigious volume "Library of Living Philosophers" under the editorship of Prop. Schilpp in the year 1950, in the honour of Dr. Radhakrishnan he was requested to give a few details of his personal life but he declined to do so and rather wished that the posterity should go through his books and make its own assessment about the man. He says, "there is a sense in which our writings, though born out of ourselves, are worth more than whatever we are. We take a good trouble about them even as devoted parents do with their children. As for our ambitions and desires which make life so intense and interesting, how many of us look straight into our souls". In the said volume, there is a beautiful essay on fragments of a confession with a title "My search for Truth". Here is an auto-biographical note. He does not speak about his parents or friends, or community and so many other things which make life what it is.

He follows the express policy of the ancient seers not to speak for the self. Aurobindo, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru were the sons of the rich parents. They had comfortable circumstances in their childhood and that had been narrated by them with gusto. But it appears, that the situation was quite different in case of Dr. Radhakrishnan.

As a child, he did not like to mix with others. He had a withdrawn nature, though he was a promising student. As a young boy one can absorb more. His memory was perhaps exceptional at this stage. The state of mind was fresh. Critical

powers of rejecting or of accepting an idea or a fact were not developed yet. Serious thinking was still at distance of time during this period. So young Radhakrishnan during these years was on the receiving end. There was no feel of being deprived of certain necessities of life at that stage of life.

Even when the times rolled on and he reached the zenith of greatness, he continued to be the defender of some of those beliefs that were formed at his tender age. The believer is not supposed to reason out his convictions and he was convinced of his position.

From 1900 to 1904 he had been a student at Voorhees' College, Bangalore. He matriculated in 1903 and married also in the same year. He moved to Madras Christian College, Madras in 1904 and remained there till 1908. He passed Intermediate Examination in the year 1905, B.A. in 1907. M.A. in 1909 and L.T. Examination in 1910. During all these academic years, he had been taught by a large number of Missionary teachers. These poor fellows could be well-meaning who could neither know nor understand the machinations of the rulers and their knowledge of India and Hinduism was shoddy. The British had come here to rule and exploit. Poor missionaries were briefed by the rulers as to how they should treat the natives. For that some sort of information was cooked up about India and the same was passed on to the missionary teachers. In the process of such orientation the Christian spirit of the teachers was adversely affected. They were now no longer on civilising mission in the real sense of the term. They could not help treating themselves as hailing from superior race.

They used to vilify and ridicule Hinduism in their respective class rooms. It was just not possible for them to realise that they had been enraging the minds of the poor Indians. This was resented by the Hindu pupils whose minds were largely formed at their homes. School is not the only influencing force in shaping the minds of the pupils. These missionaries did not know that their efforts of prostylisation would not go far. India was not a clear slate like many other areas of the world. It had been the land of so many religions where Christianity had also set its foothold about 1800 years ago. Here people were not innocent or barbarians. They were simply the decayed descendants of once the harbingers of great cultures and civilisations.

The false pride acquired through the sword of the British Imperialism did not permit many of these missionaries and other scholars to go deep into the Hindu thought whereas their contemporary German thinkers took keen interest in it. Friedrich Maxmullar who had died only in was revered amongst the educated Hindu families. In those times the speeches of Swami Vivekananda delivered here in India and abroad had stirred the souls of the people.

Missionary teachers of Bangalore did not know that one of their pupils was though silent from exterior was very much disturbed inside. He would rise one day and champion the cause of Hinduism. Hindus are generally quiet and patient from outside. Except few reactionaries, others do not believe in abusing the religions of others. It is their belief that all religions are equally good. Whatever are the differences and variations in religions of the world, they lead to the same destination of divinity. They have as such a very strong sense of tolerance in the matter of their beliefs.

Radhakrishnan's love or devotion for Hinduism was something natural, but his decision of studying philosophy at the college and university levels was incidental. One of his relatives left a few books at the house of Radhakrishnan which he had read just out of curiosity. This fact proved very consequential. His mediative mind was seized. A direction was set. The die thereby was cast by the destiny to make him a philosopher.

We might agree or disagree with his thinking but it goes without saying that his choice of taking up philosophy as a pursuit of life was accidental. He could have made a mark if he had turned to literature or journalism or law or politics. The clay of which he was made of, could have been transformed accordingly. Many illustrious sons of India were already dabbling in all these important professions.

He had chosen a direction that was extremely difficult and not immediately rewarding. As we look back and think of marvellous contributions he had made in his life time it appears that his choice of philosophy was a boon for the Indians. In the university, he was to learn Western philosophy in details as a matter of curriculum but as he reaches close to his M.A. degree he seems to have shifted some part of his interest in the details of Indian thought. His subject of thesis for the said degree was

“Ethics of Vedanta” where he attempted to develop his own philosophical position to the extent his young mind could do.

He started his career as a lecturer in the Presidency College, Madras during the year 1910. He held this position till 1916 when he was transferred to Raja Mundry where he taught philosophy for a year or so. This period of seven years was very important in his intellectual development. He also seems to have worked day and night for acquiring the grand styles of speaking and writing English prose. This was not a simple task for an individual whose mother tongue was not English. He had to read a lot of Sanskrit during this period since only then he could have entered the profound worlds of Vedas Upanishads, Gita, Brahm Sutra and other works. He studied the commentaries of Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhava. He tried to know as much as he could of Jainism and Buddhism. Along with this, he trained his guns on the Western thought. He had developed liking for Plato, Plotinus, Kant, Bradley Bergson and few others. He refers them all in many of his works in a manner, as if, he had mastered them very thoroughly.

Well, this was a theoretical preparation for undertaking many projects ahead. Like every great thinker he was convinced that mastery of the works of the philosophers from the past would not create a distinguished place for him in the history of thought. He had by then well realised that “philosophy is produced more by an encounter with reality than by the study of such encounters.”

As the time rolled on, his knowledge of philosophy and the world around expanded, intellect flourished, and style perfected. It was not a simple task in those times especially in the city of Madras. He must have made extraordinary efforts for keeping himself abreast in different areas of growing knowledge. Still his enormous learning failed to tamper the initial frame-work of his concepts. That remained intact.

His entry in the world of philosophy would always be regarded through the medium of religion. He did not travel much through vistas of history. He did not go deep in Mathematics. He did not study science. He did not apply his mind seriously to politics even. He never studied psychology also.

His love for religion kept his faith in the legitimacy of intuitive powers of the individual very effective. Logic and epistemology

did not come in his way. He seems to have realised something in himself. His mind was gradually getting ripe for the outflow of intellectual and spiritual lava.

Even as a young man, he started contributing his articles in the prestigious journals of philosophy, namely "International Journals of Ethics", "Monist", "Quest" and so on. His articles "Karma and Free Will", "A View of War from India", "Morality and Religion in Education", "Bergson's idea of God" and few others helped him to wrest some distinction in the world of philosophy.

In 1919, he was invited by the University of Mysore, to occupy the chair of philosophy. This was not a mean achievement for a young philosopher of thirty-one years. By then, he had written two books (a) "philosophy of Rabindra Nath Tagore" and (b) "Reign of Religion in Contemporary life". So far as his work on Tagore is concerned, it is very important. He had chosen a great Indian poet of this century for expressing his own views on different issues of philosophy. By then, he had drifted away from his earlier sources of inspiration. i.e. Swami Vivekananda. Here Radhakrishnan emphasises Vedic-Upanishadic elements of Tagore's philosophy. Some of the critics have even pointed out that by writing on Tagore he was, in fact, speaking his own mind. Well, great minds are likely to do many things unwittingly.

Tagore was a "Nobel Prize" winner. He had been hailed as an internationalist who earned lot of encomiums from all over the world. When he saw his biography, he too admired its author. Radhakrishnan must have felt well rewarded. In our times, we have seen a few other biographies of Tagore written by competent writers of India and of the world. As compared to those works, Radhakrishnan's book can not be rated as something of extraordinary merit. It, however, goes without saying it is one of the earliest attempts on the life of a great poet in English language.

As and when we try to study the details of a great leader of the recent past, we expect him to be either a Gandhian or a Nehruvian since the overall Indian situation had remained surcharged with the ideas of Gandhi Ji and Nehru since the second decade of this evening.

A feeling creeps in our minds, as if, there was no other great

Indian who could have made any serious contribution in the domain of thought. Patriotism or service to the nation was not the prerogative of only those who dabbled in politics or had gone to gallows or to the jails for one agitation or the other. There was a small number of such great men too who had not been proestablishment yet they declined to adopt political course of action for expressing their personalities. Men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand, Vivekananda, Tagore, Iqbal, Munshi Prem Chand, Radhakrishnan and others were there who did not defy the British Raj in the streets but had worked quietly and seriously for the regeneration of their people. Although their efforts could not become the headlines of the history of those times, they were engaged in more enduring tasks for which they worked day and night.

They had identified many of our problems and provided us the guidance for moving the wheels of history forward. We are indebted to them.

With a small but a reasonably good book on Tagore he became popular all over Bengal. English knowing Bengalis were surprised to note how a young south Indian having no knowledge of Bengali language could have acquired such a profound understanding of the poet's mind. Here he stood behind Tagore.

Radhakrishnan now started his real philosophical journey round the values of "truth", "beauty" and "goodness". These terms may appear to be simple to a casual reader but are of great importance for those who understand the significance of thought. What to say of India, even the prophets, saints, seers, and poets of many lands had applied their minds to these values. What had prompted Radhakrishnan to write on Tagore was also an effort to search deeper in their meanings. Both were involved in the details of Indian philosophy. The problems of man in general and his relations with the ultimate engaged attention of both. Although both were committed to the East still their knowledge and understanding of the Western culture and philosophy were immense. So it was not just a coincidence that Radhakrishnan picked up Tagore to define his own philosophical position. Well, he could have written on "Vivekananda" or "Tilak" or "Gokhale" but he seems to have felt himself closer to Tagore.

The style of Radhakrishnan confirms his poetic passion,

though he remains on earth. Tagore goes to heights of estasy. He gets moments of exaltation. Radhakrishnan searches for higher values of life only as an intellectual. This is a strong point of their difference. Tagore's first love was poetry and for Radhakrishnan it had been the search for knowledge. The book must have convinced the great mind of late Sir Asutosh Mukherjee popularly known as "tiger of Bengal" that if given adequate opportunities and facilities for serious studies and research, Radhakrishnan could have brought distinctions for the mother land.

By then, Calcutta University was just like other universities of the country mainly attending to the work of affiliated colleges and conducting examinations of academic degrees. Sir Mukerjee who was by then actively associated with the activities of the university wished to expand the web of its overall functioning. He planned of inducting teaching wizards and research scholars in different branches of learning on the staff so that as a University Calcutta could vie with other great universities of the world of those times.

This was obviously a partiotic urge of the man for bringing a qualitative change in the very character of the university. The British Raj could, obviously, be not enthusiastic for such a programme since that could have helped the natives to come up in different branches of learning and compete with those of the scholars in Oxford and Cambridge.

It was a great task. There was of course no dearth of such apologising Indians who believed that our institutions would never throw up outstanding men. They had neither vision nor the ambition for serious intellectual growth. They were also jealous of Sir Asutosh on account of his stupendous professional success in law as well as for his mighty ideals. They opposed him in vain as his mind was set for pushing the academic world forward.

As soon as Prof. Brojendra Nath Seal was invited by the H.H. Maharaja of Mysore to take over the charge of the new University of Mysore, the post of King George Professor of philosophy fell vacant in the University of Calcutta. Sir Mukherjee was in search of a brilliant young man and that had been Dr. Radhakrishnan who took over his new assignment in March 1921. He was just thirty years old then and had come

to succeed Prof Seal who was known as modern Encyclopaedist amongst the scholars.

Recruitment of great minds like C.V. Raman, S.K. Mitter, S.N. Bose, M.N. Saha, H.C. Roy Chowdhry and few others of extraordinary talent was also made in the said University during this period. They were all the great finds of Sir Mukarjee for which posterity should be indebted to him. Whatever may be the length, breadth and depth of the human potential, it should get facilities for uncovering and discovering itself. Most of them acquired international recognition in their specialised fields and brought laurels to their mother land. Even many wellknown Western Universities of those times could not claim more brilliant celebrities in their teaching staff than university of Calcutta.

During the year 1920, Radhakrishnan came out with another book "The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy". He acknowledges the influence of Western thinkers and examines many of them, namely Leibniz, James Ward, Rudolf Eucken, and Russell. This had been the privilege of the Indian thinkers to study the Western thought objectively and enthusiastically, but so far as western thinkers, in general, are concerned, they had demonstrated no serious interest in the world of Eastern thought assuming that it was of no consequence. Scholars of the oriental studies, are of course exceptions.

Radhakrishnan asserts in this work that all ancient cultures were founded on religion. There could be some variation in emphasizing different aspects of life. Just as Greeks relied more on "reason" and Hindus on "love" and ultimately these factors become the starting points of their long cultural developments. The book arrested the attention of the thoughtful minds both in India and abroad and thereby Radhakrishnan's name had acquired additional respectability.

Now the British world of philosophy had noted in him a scholar who could have taken up an awaited project of writing a readable account of the history of the Indian philosophy. Prof. J.H. Muirhead approached him to take up this assignment since there could be no better choice than him for such an important project.

Dr. Radhakrishnan agreed to write comprehensive volumes for general readers. Soon after their availability in the printed form the Western readers had not simply been impressed by the

performance of the author rather were now found more concerned with the wealth of Indian thought. By now, the ego of the English scholarship that had been tampered by the British rule in India was also mollified. A new realisation was emerging that there had been something enduring in the antiquity of Indian culture and civilisation. Dr. L.P. Jacks, the principal, Manchester college, Oxford saw a few papers of this Indian in the Hibbert Journals. There were many others in India wielding their pens in philosophy but there was only one and one Radhakrishnan who could be so precise and exact in his expression and was so clear and profound in this thinking. So Dr. Jacks invited him to visit Great Britain and deliver Upton lectures. This was obviously a great honour for an Indian. Those lectures were ultimately published in the form of a book "The Hindu View of Life" in 1926.

This is not that Hinduism which we happen to live in India. This is rather an idealistic presentation of Radhakrishnan's religious faith. He calls his religion a movement, always growing and changing. It is not a finished product once prepared for the use of all the generations to come. According to him, it can always be improved upon. It is not a dead mass of some worn out ceremonies or meaningless rituals or certain irrelevant beliefs.

There are, of course many practices of Hinduism which can no longer be defended by the normal standards of reasoning or common sense. Radhakrishnan had vehemently opposed that all. He on the other hand, searches for 'truth' against tradition and reason against faith.

According to modern sociology, the study of traditions is very important since it helps us to know how the frontiers of human life had been shaping from time to time in the history. New problems arise when times change, new demands crop up, but the traditions usually hold the community back. Those who happen to enjoy certain privileges under a particular system, do not support the urges of change and thus do not permit the history to move forward. They fear that the breakup with the past would jeopardise their position. They are not that enlightened that they may look beyond the realms of their self interest. So they refuse to rise to the occasion and thereby defend the traditions as a matter of faith or belief. They remain stuck up.

Dr. Radhakrishnan fearlessly condemned certain beliefs of the Hindu society and had highlighted its dynamic side. He especially refers to that mechanism which helps Hinduism to transform its character under the changing conditions.

The Upton lectures confirm that the speaker is a specialist of Indian and European philosophies and is quite different from the common brand of specialists who do not possess the general view of the situation and remain in the isolated shells of their specialisation. He possesses a comprehensive view of his own religion as well as of others. His knowledge of Hindu scriptures is exhaustive and is respectful to their contents. He acknowledges their authority, but he does not permit his thinking to be all subservient to the knowledge and wisdom contained therein. He retains his intellectual independence.

His position was now well established in the West. In September 1926, he was invited at the Philosophical Congress held at Harvard where he addressed the august audience of the world thinkers, writers and philosophers. It is available in the form of a booklet 'Kalki'. Its contents are really revealing. I wonder how all this could strike to his mind while being in India far away from the main centres of science and technology.

The lecture was delivered when most of the Western Thinkers were living under utter confusion. A ruthless brand of socialism was fast coming up in the Soviet Union. 'God' was yet to fail in Europe. Fascism was consolidating its stronghold in Italy. Nazism was steadily emerging in Germany. What to say of common men and women who can be easily warmed up with the hysteria of war propaganda, many eminent thinkers of those times adopted apologetic postures against the increasing tyrannies of various ideologies and justified them as "historic inevitability."

But here was a thinker from the land of Mahavira, Buddha, Nanak, Chishti, Vivekananda and Gandhi who poohpoohed the inhuman systems conditioning the minds of the peoples. He ridiculed the economic levelling of the human beings by the champions of socialism. He condemned its policy of standardisation for seeking salvation in a herd. He denounced the condemnation of man on the basis of his religious faith or ethnic group. He stoutly defended the freedom of the individual and aspired that it should not be robbed under any pretext.

Many young Indian writers of our times who have leftist leanings feel that Radhakrishnan's opposition to socialism was incorrect or he could not reason out his view point correctly. Well, much can be said for and against this view. Dr. Radhakrishnan had not visited the Soviet Union. The literature on the socialist thought was also scarcely available in India of those times. His sources to study socialism were only books in English. Then he had a very strong background of Hinduism where emphasis is laid on the individual's freedom.

Socialism could acquire credibility in India only after it had shed much of its original ruthlessness and also by integrating certain characteristics of Gandhism and Nehruism in its scheme. Socialist ideology that is popular in India at present is quite different from that of Stalin's.

'Kalki' is though a small book in appearance but it includes valuable fund of information. Only a great mind could have stated such subtle things in that decade of the country.

We have already pointed out regarding the publication of his two prestigious volumes of Indian Philosophy. These are still rated as works of great learning and scholarship, but unfortunately there is dearth of serious readership in our country. We find their copies lying in the shelves of all the libraries rubbing their shoulders with the major classics of the world philosophies. Writing such volumes was an extremely difficult task for an individual, however competent he might be. Here we find the fundamental ideas of Indian Philosophers well defined and precisely stated.

The study of these two volumes would acquaint a common reader with the basic problems of Indian philosophy. Men like Mr. H.N. Spalding could see the merit of the volumes and was so impressed that he had got a chair of Professorship in Indian thought created in the University of Oxford for Dr. Radhakrishnan.

This was obviously something unusual that an Indian should teach in a university of Great Britain. The matter did not stop here. Now invitation after invitation began to flow to him from all parts of the world for delivering addresses in the great conferences. A true spokesman of Indian thought had come on the firmament.

He fought tooth and nail against the false propaganda of all

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those Western Indologists who had been spreading the view that Hinduism was resting on the brittle rocks of world negation ideas. He asserted that his religion pleaded the inspiring qualities like integrity, hope, optimism courage, initiative, tolerance detachment etc. He advocates the need of a "Vital religion" that should uphold the voices of wisdom and reason.

Hinduism had seldom recommended to strive material advantages. It does not advocate to conquer nature or invade countries and indulge in killing people. It had seldom appealed for raising an organised church. Our distinguished men and women had never been mighty kings or ruthless generals rather saints and seers who always preferred "poverty" to "power" and "service" to the "domination".

He suggests us not to ignore past rather study it, understand and make use of it. It is not to be followed blindly. He does not belong to the group of those rabid Hindu Revivalists who assert that their ancestors had been the models of perfection over whom no further improvement could be proposed. Their thoughts had acquired all time finality. Dr. Radhakrishnan on the other hand directs the attention of his age to the time and space it happens to live in.

In the year 1932, his Hibbert Lectures came out in the form of an important book, "The idealist view of Life". Here he defines his value system and that is applied in all the works which he had written thereafter. His idealism is many coloured. Under, all the variations there are certain common fundamental assumptions that confirm them all to be the products of same spirit.

His ideals relate to the future. He admits the role of reason in human life, but highlights the place of intuition in the scheme of individual's thinking. The book confirms very high level of the intellectual perception of the writer. In the year 1937, he was requested to deliver the "Kamala Lectures" and the same were published as a book, "Religion and Society". The content and the manner of style of these books startled many British writers of those times.

During the years 1938 to 1941, he was every year granted leave of absence from Calcutta for the months January to June so that he could hold the chair of the Eastern Religions at the University of Oxford. This was obviously a rare distinction for

a person to hold two chairs simultaneously. This arrangement could not continue after 1941 on account of world war II.

In the beginning, he was merely a teacher concerned with his lectures, research and other allied academic activities, but gradually Sir Mukerjee had been involving him in the administrative affairs of the University also. This experience proved to be of a great help to him in the years to come and for that he could be a successful Vice-Chancellor of Banaras University in the years to come. This new university was passing through its teething period when Dr. Radhakrishnan took it over but he gave a plausible account of himself in his new assignment as an administrator. Thereafter, he was known as a very great man of educational field, but he still wished to remain Calcutta based.

Chapter II

Biographical (II)

Time had come for him to share more important responsibilities in the national life. The Late Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya approached him to take over the charge of the Banaras Hindu University. The British Raj was not favourably disposed to this Indian centre of learning. Dr. Radhakrishnan accepted the challenging position and thus resigned from the University of Calcutta where he had spent two valuable decades of his life. While leaving this university he sums up his views in his letter of resignation dated 20.3.41, "On this occasion I recall with great gratitude the uniformly kind and generous treatment I have had for over twenty years i.e. since March 1921 when I first took up this appointment. I feel happy that during this period it was given to me to serve this university not only as a professor, but also in several other capacities, as a member of the Executive Council, the syndicate, President of the Post Graduate Council in Arts, delegate the congresses of the universities of the British empire and the International congress of Philosophy, at the Harvard University. If in the course of my service here such coveted distinctions as the Hibbert Lectureship, an Oxford Chair, Fellowship of the British Academy and Fellowship of All Souls at Oxford came my way, the credit is due mainly to the facilities offered and encouragement given to me by the University authorities from the time of the great Sir Asutosh Mukerjee who selected me for this post in 1920".

Banaras is a holy place of the Hindus. It is a city of their pilgrimage. This is why Late Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya decided to set up a University here on modern lines where past, present and future of India could be suitably integrated. As Malviya Ji was failing in his health he asked Dr. Radhakrishnan to take over the responsibility of the university so that the

ambitions with which Pandit Ji had started the educational work could continue.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's posting as Vice-Chancellor was a clear acknowledgement of the fact that the leadership of the country had pinned faith on him. National Movement had, by then, turned more vigorous. The students of this University were also on war path since the British Raj was determined to crush their patriotic urges. It was not possible for the Raj to tolerate Indian students getting restive. Once even the angry Governor of the province had bragged to convert the university campus into a hospital. Dr. Radhakrishnan was fully seized with the seriousness of the situation and tried to contact the Governor General of India through one of his friends and so impressed the authorities that a show down in the university was averted. He had already acquired a distinguished position as a philosopher. Now his countrymen began to know him as an able administrator.

Indian scene was fast changing. Tagore had passed away in 1941. Aurobindo had long settled in Pondicherry. The social, political and intellectual leadership of the resurgent India was with Gandhi Ji and his friends. Dr. Radhakrishnan had all along been a keen observer of the overall situation and wished to move with the times. He tried to meet Gandhi Ji number of times at Madras, Calcutta, and even at Sabarmati and had detailed discussions with him on different social, philosophical and religious issues. It would not be fair to say that he turned Gandhian rather became an ardent admirer of Gandhi Ji and this is why on the seventieth birthday of the Father of Nation he planned to edit a volume of "Essays and Reflections on Gandhi's Life and Works".

Meanwhile his other philosophical pursuits carried onward. He had produced number of great books namely "Brahm Sutra" and "Dharmapada". In the latter work he highlighted Buddhism and gave importance to its great minds Asanga, Aswaghosh etc. and made them stand in queue with Bardhayana and Shankara in the history of Indian thought.

India was freed in August 1947. A few months thereafter he approached Gandhi Ji for seeking permission to dedicate his work "Bhagwad Gita" to the Father of Nation. By now, he was not simply an intellectual giant who should have wrestled in

the class rooms or in the seminars of the universities. Time had come for him to come out of the ivory towers and play more important role in the destiny of the nation. His services were utilised in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, the body entrusted to draw the Constitution of India.

Nehru took over as the first Prime Minister of the country in the year 1947. It was one thing to be the Prime Minister of India but it had been quite another to rule over the minds of the people. He was in need of great men of various fields who could have helped him in the epochal tasks of national reconstruction. So he called upon Dr. Radhakrishnan for making appropriate use of his services. New India could not have been created by the assistance of that rotten system of education given by the British Raj. Future requirements were to be thoughtfully worked out for meeting the challenges waiting ahead. There could be no person more suitable than Dr. Radhakrishnan for heading the Universities Education Commission. A detailed report was prepared under his guidance. It is the irony of the Indian history that many of its recommendations are lying unattended till date. India was politically liberated but the shackles of Imperialism had many dimensions. Over it, habits die hard. The winds of change had started blowing over the country, but the vested interests based on the shallowness of the past structures was not ready to accept changes willingly. Intellectual and mental attitudes of slavery were persisting. History has moved quite fast during these years but we have still to get rid of many influences which form the heritage of the British Rule in India.

The character of Indian education had so developed under the heels of the British Imperialism that its transformation was not easily possible. Its growth had been at once useful and harmful in so many ways. The discerning of details was hard nut to crack. The microscopic minority of the educated in English tradition did not like the replacement of that system which had provided it coveted positions in the society. The learning in the national languages was considered to be low in terms of quality. We are in mess till date. Dr. Radhakrishnan was a champion of English language. It was perhaps not possible for him to look at the entire issue dispassionately.

Meanwhile he was called upon by the UNESCO as the Chairman of its Executive Board. This was, in fact, functioning

in the world body. He attended many of its important conferences not as an observer rather as an active participant in many of its deliberations. He was one of those who had been entrusted the responsibility of drawing up the blue prints of this world body.

His countrymen were watching his superb performance in the said organisation and feeling elated. Pandit Nehru had already noted his brilliance and now wished that Dr. Radhakrishnan should be roped into more intricate affairs of the State. Although the former had been the prime Minister, and was thus concerned with every problem of the state, yet his love for handling the foreign affairs of the country was the first one. Right from the year 1927, he had correctly visualised that India and Russia were two great neighbours. They had many similar problems and even common interests. Their drawing closer was a historic inevitability.

So he wished in 1949 that a great Indian should have been the Ambassador at Moscow. Mrs. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, Nehru's real sister was our first Indian representative in the Soviet land. The Soviets had very little knowledge of emergent India. They were not convinced that this great country was no longer an appendage of the British Imperialism. She had broken her chains of past slavery and was now set on to play its important role in the comity of the nations. Her leadership was thrown up by the historic forces and that had wrested the power from the British Imperialism through a consistent struggle.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was reluctant to enter the world of diplomacy. He knew it was a specialised art and for that he had not been equipped, academically or professionally. After Mrs. Pandit's term in Moscow, Pandit Nehru wished Dr. Radhakrishnan to go there as an Indian Ambassador. The latter had led a life which was qualitatively different from that of a normal diplomat. At the same time, he did not like to stop teaching at Oxford since that was a coveted position. Pandit Nehru agreed to his teaching at Oxford along with his ambassadorship at Moscow. This was obviously an unusual concession. Stalin was alive and dominating the world scene. Indian diplomacy was still infancy and had to acquire its legitimate place especially in Moscow. Dr. Radhakrishnan proved himself a heavy weight for the assignment. He did not care to

learn the strict rules and regulations of diplomacy and never paid heed to the trivialities of profession.

He was now shuttling between Moscow and Oxford. During his tenure in Moscow he had seized some time even to write his classical work of "Upnishadas". Gradually, circumstances began to change. The Soviets had by now realised that a new India was born and that would play an important role in the years to come. Stalin, who was believed to be a very tough man conceded to meet this sage of the Indian Embassy. It is on records that Dr. Radhakrishnan met him as a great "Rishi" and Stalin perhaps sat before him just like some humble Indian King of the ancient times. Stalin was so impressed by the learning and wisdom of the Indian Thinker that he sent a message to Indian Embassy that before Dr. Radhakrishnan had returned to India after completing his term, he would like to meet the Indian philosopher.

Dr. Radhakrishnan met Stalin again as a friend and as an equal. He could discuss with Soviet leader the problems of peace fearlessly and quoted the illustrious examples of Asoka, the great, who abandoned war after the victory of the battle of Kalinga. This change of heart was really miraculous. Stalin acknowledged that such unusual things did happen in history. The meeting ended in all pleasantness. Times marched on and gradually the beginnings of Indo-Soviet friendship were laid.

After Moscow, his indebted countrymen elevated him to the position of Vice-President of the Indian Union. This position could have been a challenge even to a seasoned statesman and a parliamentarian, but Radhakrishnan was a great mind. He might have reasonable knowledge of parliamentary affairs but very high level of common sense which helped him in controlling the proceedings of the "Rajya Sabha" very effectively. He was to handle many vibrant and explosive members in the said Sabha and at the same time had to lay down the procedures of overall conduct in the house for time to time.

At times, it appeared from the press gallery as if, he was conducting a class of defiant pupils, but as a skilful teacher. He was in a position to manage the situation by dint of his overwhelming personality. He continued to be the Vice-President of the country for a period of one decade. During this period he had toured many parts of the world. He made full use of this

opportunity through delivering messages of his great country from the platforms of world organisations as well as from the universities both of India and abroad.

He made the world feel that a new India was emerging as a moral force to be reckoned with. What Pandit Nehru wished to achieve for India as a political leader, Dr. Radhakrishnan was driving towards that end through the media of Indian thought and philosophy. The times have revealed that he had enhanced the prestige of India as well as the credibility of Indian philosophy.

His services were acknowledged all over as a Vice-President and, as a result, he was promoted to the Presidentship of Indian Union in the year 1957. This was not something unusual for this country of sages and saints, but the lovers of philosophy all over the world felt proud that here was a democracy where an eminent thinker could reach such a high position. For the Pandits of constitution, Indian President may be a figure head, but in fact, he is a mentor and guide of the nation and is supposed to remain above the day-to-day politics.

His term of Presidency was a trying period for the nation. There was an unexpected massive attack on Northern frontiers of the country. That had shaken the people as well as leadership. Pandit Nehru could not bear this rude shock. On 27th May 1964 he passed away. This death was a personal loss to Dr. Radhakrishnan. Late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri became the next Prime Minister. Now an attack came from Pakistan in the year 1965. Dr. Radhakrishnan demonstrated a very high sense of restraint under all those circumstances. Country was to be defended but war hysteria was also to be checkmated. India is a peculiar society. There are many restraints for the leaders as well as for the state that cannot be explained away. The leadership has to conduct the affairs very cautiously.

After completing his term of Presidency he decided to settle at Madras for leading a quiet retired life. It would be difficult to account for his degrees. He was knighted in 1931. He was awarded Honorary Ph. D. or D. Litt degrees from Tehran, Tribhuwan, Pennssylvania, Moscow, Cambridge, Oxford and many other universities of the world. Had he stayed in Delhi after relinquishing the office, his philosophic mind would not have acquired that solitude for which he had

seriously aspired. Madras knew him more as a teacher, a philosopher and a thinker than as President of Indian Union. He passed away on 16th April, 1975.

Life may be a "a mysterious fabric woven by chance, fate and character" for Radhakrishnan but for his countrymen he played his innings marvellously. He was one of the architects of modern India. He did not simply update Indian thought rather represented the spirit of modern India to the world. The generation of men like Aurbindo, Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru and Radhakrishnan is over. These Indian giants could be compared with the best of the world figures of their times namely, Tolstoy, Lenin, Russell, Shaw, Mao and so on.

Chapter III

A Religious Mind

“He has, in fact, helped the modern man in awareness of philosophy in its widest sweep which includes the traditions of ancient Egypt and India, China, the Arab world as well as the contributions of the modern West”.

Prof. H. Kabir

Great thinkers like Plato, Shankara, Hegel, Marx, Gandhi, Russell and Aurbindo tried to work out neat systems of their respective philosophies. We study them by delineating how they reached particular conclusions which had been the results of their erudite learning, careful observations and profound investigations, but Dr. Radhakrishnan adopted a different course in working out the details of his philosophy.

He did possess those high levels of originality and ability which are the pre-requisites of a great thinker for throwing up a complete system of philosophy, but he did not work in that direction. Prof. Muir once paid tribute to Dr. Radhakrishnan's book “An idealist view of life” which explains the position on this score, “If originality in philosophy as in poetry consists not in the novelty of the tale, not even in the distribution of light and shade in the telling of it, but in the depth with which its significance is grasped and made to dominate over details”, An Idealist View of Life certainly does not fail in this quality. As regards his academic ability he had full command over the principles of Western and Eastern thought. He still did not claim himself to be a thinker rather just an interpreter or a commentator of Indian Thought to the world.

He wished that the people should know it and understand its relevance. He admitted that credibility of its scriptures was unassailable, though he was aware of many useless things con-

tained therein. He drew the attention of the modern age to those portions which are important even to-day. While handling his material he took strong exceptions to certain Western thinkers who had wielded their pens on Hinduism without understanding its depth.

He ridiculed their charge that as a religion or philosophy it was founded on "world negation view" or it did not encourage ethical responsibility. He does not mind Western Scholars talking tall of Christianity as something positive, or dynamic and even creative but he gets angry when they say in the same breathe that Hinduism as something quietistic and contemplative with a strong tendency to deny the reality of this world or recommending escape from confronting the issues of the age.

In his writings he had given valuable suggestions to his readers. He was seized with the tensions of his age. He works for new integrations rather higher integrations. Life is not a riddle or a problem to be solved. It is a reality to be experienced. His works contain lot of philosophy, but that is straight, and clear. Many intricate details have been stated in the clearest possible manner.

He was neither an active politician nor a social reformer nor a theologian of any particular brand of Hinduism. He continued to be a thinker. He had his independent views regarding the problems prevailing in his own times. Still his love for philosophy was first. Other things were secondary to him. He stuck to his profession with all other preoccupation. As a thinker, his commitment to "Advaita" was undoubted, still he tried to maintain his freedom within the orbit of his thought. He did not permit his liberty to be overwhelmed by his learning or by the circumstances in which he was to function and thus stuck to self-direction. He was capable of handling all kinds of ideas without being overpowered. His ego was quite tough, yet he did not permit his emotional stability getting squandered away.

Ingenuity and reasoning only do not make a man a great thinker. "Other things should also be there in his kit". For becoming a scholar of great distinction he had to work day and night. This was obviously a time consuming work for which he could not get enough time for mixing with the people and then knowing of the depths of their minds. He had no crusading

approach like that of Gandhi.

On the other hand, he put all of his efforts in describing the intricate ancient ideas which had turned extremely difficult to comprehended for our age. Most of them had gone in oblivion. It is not possible to recreate those conditions under which certain thinkers had applied their minds regarding life around them. We live in a different era. Our environment cannot be compared with those of hoary past. Men had then limited demands over others. They could well afford to live in themselves. The issues relating to social and political repercussions did not disturb them seriously. Each individual could well afford to be a world in himself. His value system was accordingly built up.

Radhakrishnan goes deep into the woods of Indian thought and tries to present its spirit in general. The data, he studied, is of unusual nature which does not go straight into the minds of his readers. He read the original texts of many scriptures in Sanskrit and grasped their essence to the best of his ability. Most of these ancient documents were compiled or written thousands of years ago when the human civilisation had made its beginnings. Many of the terms, idioms and phrases used therein had acquired quite different literal and others meanings in our times.

We are, however, not concerned with that exactness of things rather should know the substance and that too for evaluating their relevance. This was an enormous work which should have been entrusted to a group or to an institute of scholars by the state, but India was not a free State then. The foreign rule could not have taken up such an important assignment for the helpless natives who were still lying in the state of Somnabulism. So the patriot, in Radhakrishnan took up the cudgles of his own. He appointed himself to do this work. No other person could have achieved that all in one life time.

The origins of religious faith or thought could have been real or imaginary fears of the early man, but the fact remains that religion as a phenomenon was controlling human life in the ancient times. What to say of birth, marriage and death, even the hygiene, health, clothes and professions were governed by religious considerations and calculations. Philosophy had no independent existence. It was an integrated part of religious thought. Scientific thinking was in its embryonic stage, and had

hardly acquired a status of "a foot note" of religious thought. Europe had experienced a long preparatory period of Renaissance which had overhauled the character of its civilisation from its roots. That had not happened in India. Here the state of affairs had not changed in a big way. The situation in terms of history had undergone a big change only in this century.

Science and technology have been expanding very fast in our times and that is resulting in predictable situations. In the West, the growth of science had been a gradual process and the adjustments in the life conditions had been taking place imperceptibly. That could not happen in India.

Her people were not ready to move with the fast changes. They had been in great need of such minds who could have inspired them to move with the times without losing grip of their own selves. Dr. Radhakrishnan was one of them. He accepts that science has come to stay and advance further and further. Its findings are bound to influence the minds of the people and its overall usefulness should be acknowledged. The advantages of its discoveries and inventions should be made available to the people. It is a reliable branch of human knowledge. He concedes that gradually its influences would be felt in the domains of culture and ethics. Still he insists that the progressive use of science would not turn religion irrelevant. It would rather continue to spread its civilising influence. Its essential areas are intact and its impact on human life would carry on. The continuous refinement of human spirit is absolutely necessary,

At the same time, he advocates the reasoned faith. He believes in the autonomy of man. He denounces those parts of religious faith which have been rejected by science. He ridicules those characteristics of religion which make "our daily life petty and trivial breaking up our humanity into different sections reducing our manhood into narrow provincialism". He pities that, "we are shut off from the universal spirit by a hundred artificial barriers". He advises that we must "recover the spiritual dimensions of life, the lack of which has cramped and darkened the culture of modern world".

The findings of science are never absolute. These are always under repairs. Science as a phenomenon remains incomplete and is always in making. It is, humble, enquiring, inquisitive

and young. There are many questions for which science has no answer till date, but human curiosity presses to know them. Philosophy comes to rescue but its answers are only probable. As a discipline, it is less exacting than that of science.

In the near or far off future the possibilities of scientific knowledge would expand still further and then it might offer more appropriate answers to those questions which have not so far been answered by scientists. Philosophers would set their camps of serious thinking far ahead from those of the scientists and try to apply their minds. Some break-through with the passage of time is inevitable. Scientific knowledge progresses and reaches the outskirts of philosophy. This would not adversely affect the latter since it looks new areas of world of thought and applies itself to those questions about which we cannot imagine at the moment. So in this way philosophic and scientific pursuits would continue for the imaginable time to come.

It is very interesting to note that Dr. Radhakrishnan and Bertrand Russell thought alike on this vital issue of "Future of philosophy". Both of them foresaw the role of philosophy in the destiny of human race since it is that branch of knowledge which is to consider things in the realm of thought before their serious scientific investigations are possible.

Attending to certain rites, ceremonies and other formalities do not make a religion. That might be the expressions of certain religious feelings or experience but according to Dr. Radhakrishnan this does not go very far.

Religious experience is for the total person. It is a state of ecstasy in which being is totally absorbed. When the flash of absolute reality breaks through the normal barriers of conscious mind, it leaves a trail of illumination in its wake. Now this experience has been explained away in so many ways by the people of the same as well as of different religious denominations. Its details have come down to us as "religious theories" enunciated by great prophets, saints, and seers. These are not mere speculations.

Here comes a question whether those theories can be treated as correct. Science also accepts certain theories first and these are observed and experimented upon afterwards. Whatever passes through all the possible tests is scientifically accepted and

the rest is rejected. Now the term "experience" is so vast that its entire area cannot be covered by science and scientific method. It is rather a multidimensional phenomenon, namely moral, spiritual, aesthetic, religious and so on. "We", says Radhakrishnan "cannot exclude from the experience of the passion for knowledge, the excitement of beauty, the passion for goodness....."

Dr. Radhakrishnan belonged to that generation of Indian leaders who were for cultivating certain lofty ideals amongst the people through the medium of religion. He himself was a glistening drop in the ocean of Indian Renaissance. His faith in the goodness of man was real. According to him, "man, unless he is sadistic is happy when he is gentle and merciful". He wishes that man's commitment to the religion should be stronger since it deals with the inner spirit of the individual. It is, in fact, a "reasoned faith" or the "philosophy of spiritual life".

He defines the aim of religious man "is not to degrade the vision to the demands of actual but to raise the actual to the pattern of the ideal". Religion should operate as a force that would help the individual to attain certain level of perfection. It would bring in many virtues in the behaviour of the individual by which he would improve qualitatively. For him, "religion is not a creed code but an insight into reality". There is no place of communalism or fanaticism or dogmatism or fundamentalism or even fatalism in his scheme of religion. For him "religion is not magic or witch craft, quackery or superstition". He hails it a force that should be creative, revolutionary and progressive but coupled with an element of tolerance. He points out, "My religious sense did not allow me to speak a rash or profane word of anything which the soul of man holds and has held sacred".

It is feared by Dr. Radhakrishnan that if the religion is stamped out from the personality of the individual, he would get spiritually destabilised and, in due course, become rootless. His links with his innerself would vanish. He does not advocate a particular brand of religion to follow. He recommends the universality of religion and its significance. He is fully conscious of those forces that had tarnished the name of religion, but he advises us to ignore that and thereby draws the attention, to the fact that founders of all religions were the champions of humanism. Their lives were the sagas of sacrifices and selfless-

ness. It is they who had demonstrated the best that a human being could be. Men like Lord Mahavira, Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, Nanak, etc., are believed to be towering personalities or the model of perfections that a man could ever think of.

His preference for "Advaita" has already been referred in a previous chapter, but his reverence for Buddhism and Jainism was same as that for Hinduism. His work on Buddhism 'Dham-pada' is in the same strain of veneration as that of his commentary for "Brahm Sutra". He reminded his readers that the religious movements of Jainism and Buddhism were the off-shoots of Hinduism. Their founders were born and brought up in the Indian environment. They reacted against the depraved prevailing conditions and tried to cleanse the society with the best of their ability. They offered better styles of spiritual life to lead. India had been a land where varying creeds, sects, races and tribes had learnt to live together. They had been quietly exchanging their values, cultures, customs and even their vices since time immemorial.

Rise of these movements was a great step forward in the history of mankind, but gradually these too were absorbed in the Hindu society without leaving any particular division. As centuries rolled on the followers of these movements had, though, acquired separate religious denominations yet tried to remain integral parts of the Indian society. As regards Jainism, it remained closer to the Hindu milieu. The Buddhism of course drifted away but to a negligible degree.

Chapter IV

A Philosopher

God has been a reality or a discovery or an invention, or the result of certain fears and some compulsions of human race is difficult to state till date. Still, it is a fact that poor man had, somehow revolved around Him for working out some kind of order in his life. This is why, he had been discussing debating and admiring His attributes since time immemorial.

What is He? Who is He? What is His form? What is His size? Where does He live? Why does He interfere in human affairs? Why did He create this world? Why did He make man so frail? Is He omniscient? Is He Omnipotent? If He is everything, what is the role of man in the world?

If this world is 'maya' everything is reduced to nothingness. In that case all kinds of distinctions are meaningless. All considerations are unnecessary. Human knowledge raised so far is incomplete. There are innumerable questions for which no definite or verifiable answers are available. Prophets, sages, saints and scholars of the past and of the present times had applied their minds to know God, final answers have not been made available won today. The scientists of the nineteenth century had rejected the existence of God under the influence of their scientific modalities but this is not the view of the scientists of our times. They try to avoid discussions on this sensitive subject. The scientists of the last century had not been the first lot of wise people who who doubted His existence. Human wisdom had refuted God number of times even prior to them, but He had again and again puzzled. The final answer is still awaited.

Dr. Radhakrishnan goes to "Adi Shankara" while clarifying his views about God. He accepts the impersonal Brahman as ultimate reality. In other words, in the highest philosophic experience the notion of personal God is to be transcended. Dr.

Radhakrishnan says, "While the character of God as personal meets certain religious needs, there are other needs that are not fulfilled by it". "In the highest spiritual experience", he elaborates it further, "we have the sense of rest and fulfilment, of eternity and completeness. These needs have provoked, from the beginning of human reflection, the conceptions of the Absolute as pure and passionless being which transcends the restless turmoil of cosmic life". For Radhakrishnan Brahman is impersonal absolute, transcendent and universal consciousness also. The form of Brahman as Kali, Krishna or other gods vanishes with the emergence of divine consciousness in man. Concretisation is replaced by abstraction. He accepts the reality of both God and Brahman. For him, Absolute is the precosmic God and that is projected as a creative force. That creates, guides, maintains and evolves. So Dr. Radhakrishnan believes that God is a force imminent and transcendent.

Prof. Moore says, "His (Radhakrishnan's) theory is that which may sound absolute idealism must hold, namely that the Absolute is the only ultimate and complete reality and that the empirical world is clearly a secondary reality, relative and dependent but the empirical world is not for that the reason unreal". For Dr. Radhakrishnan, individual has no choice but to live in this world, yet he may not be in it. He is never out of this world. This world is not an illusion. He even defends Shankara regarding whom it is believed that he took away Indians in the alleys of escapism and indifference. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan this was not the contention of Shankara. This world is real in its own place. One has to perform good actions over here.

It is true that religious men today are on the defensive. They are finding it difficult to convince the people around about the legitimacy of religious thoughts and actions. At the same time, human society is wallowing in the oceans of confusion and distrust. Advancement of knowledge and even economic benefits have not increased the peace and happiness of people. They may not like going back to past religions but are searching certain substitutes for comforting or stabilising their disturbed minds.

God and religions in His name have been set aside, but their poor replacements in the form of certain theories supporting racialism or nationalism or materialism or something else are

being thrown up. These alternatives are also being rejected as some thing unsatisfactory. It appears as if we are lost in the fair of life. We have rather been pushed into the world which is more troublesome and criminal. It seems that if we have no scruples. We have lost all sense of shame and can go to any length for selfish ends.

The advancement of Science and Technology has certainly brought many advantages to the human race but it has certain dark shadows too. We have more to eat, more to read, more to know and above all better standard of living than ever in the human history but at the same time now thoughts are controlled, brains are washed, minds are poisoned and misunderstandings are spread. The possibilities of free serious thinking have been curtailed. Men are carrying wounded souls within their bodies.

Dr. Radhakrishnan never believed in the Marxist Jargon of 'historic inevitability'. He asserts that "man must become an active purposeful force. He must cease to believe in an automatic law of progress, which will realise itself irrespective of human ideals and control". His philosophy is not merely a theoretical speculation or individual meditation or the flight of the alone for Alone. It is Action oriented.

Human existence is very fragile and delicate, It must be supported by powerful thoughts or by a great ideology or by a strong faith so that it could sustain itself as otherwise man would turn an old oak tree moving this way or that with the winds of times as if having no strength of his own. Poor creature is always under strain. He has to work very hard and come up and strive for perfection. After all, what is that which would transform him? It is obviously the preparedness and that is a matter of spirit.

Dr. Radhakrishnan feels that there is a spark of divinity in each man and that should be discovered and made use of. He acknowledges the achievements of power and of knowledge but rates them of lesser order than those acts of spirit and morality. A whole man shall have grace and joy of soul. He overflows in love and sympathy. He has higher aims of devotion. He searches inward peace. He does not underrate the significance of physical efficiency, intellectual alertness, speculation, knowledge and economics in shaping the destiny of man, but reconstru-

ction of man as a whole would not be possible without his inside development.

Dr. Radhakrishnan laments the overemphasis on science and technology since these have reduced the individual to a robot. It appears as if he is just a tool. There is no mind in him. Dr. Radhakrishnan believes like other great Indian savants of the past that if spirituality is weeded out of man, the craving of personal aggrandisement would come in to pollute him from inside to out.

Prior to the emergence of Marxism in the afternoon of the last century, we can hardly name any respectable school of philosophy supporting the views that social forces and society could be of more importance than that of an individual in shaping the destiny of human race. Indian thought invariably puts individual at the centre and this belief is not prevalent in Hinduism alone. Its principal ideal of "Moksha" is the highest point of perfection which the man can possibly visualise. The idealist in Dr. Radhakrishnan is convinced that the Evolution of Man was a great step forward in the history of life since an animal had by then seen the light of the day who was blessed with unusual faculties of thinking, innovating, creating and inventing new things. As a result, this animal is expected to lead a qualitatively distinctive life from the rest of the animal life of the world.

It is only in the afternoon of his life, he directed his interests to know more of Marxism and existentialism, but his mind was by then saturated with the wisdom of the East. No particular change in his overall thinking was noted thereafter though he appears to be more informed about the modern philosophies. It is true that he was an idealist but he was well aware of materialistic forces and their significance in his times. He was not floating in the air. His abhorance of such ideologies which recommended to worship wealth or comfort or class or nation was abundantly clear. He seriously wishes that religion should function as a vital force. Old ideas should be scrutinised and wherever we find something creative and universal that should be popularised. Whatever negative or fatalistic is contained there in, should be courageously condemned. He does not abandon his Indian-ness or his faith in Indian philosophy. He laments that India had failed on political front but in the same

breathe he counts the achievements of Indian philosophy.

He affirms again and again that individual is required to play his part in the battle of life very vigorously. He is not supposed to run away in front of hardships. He is evolved to struggle. He is not on an idle pilgrimage or retreat. "Moksha" does not mean escapism or fatalism or indolence. It is the highest ideal ever conceived by man. The river has the passion of overwhelming love which forces it to run down the slopes of high mountains and then long stretched plains and there after it reaches the sea. Here is the meeting point of lover, and beloved. The same is the role of man. God is ocean and is loved by Bhagtaic man (rivers) for His sake and not for any personal benefit. So they have to meet.

Such an ideal does not strongly elaborate the social actions of the individual. The argument appears to be far fetched if we say that ocean is humanity. There had been many saints and sages whose social contribution is enormous, but there had been others too who only pursued "Bhagti Marga". This ideal has no appeal in the evening of the twentieth century. Dr. Radhakrishnan had come to explain his position much after Swami Vivekananda, Tilak and Gandhi. He was conscious of it and thus put additional weight on the role of man in society. The latter, could be "remade only by changing men's hearts and minds".

Dr. Radhakrishnan is hailed as a great interpreter of ancient Indian thought, but it goes without saying that he had his eyes and mind set on the period he was living. How could he be indifferent to the social, economic political and other problems that were being confronted by his age? He had strong political convictions like other great leaders of India. He had to face many problems while holding highest administrative and political offices of the land, but in the professional sense of the term he was neither a politician nor a political thinker. He did not develop his views in details, regarding the theory and structures of State or for "liberty" or equality or "rights" or "duties".

He had, of course, expressed his political ideas in general on different occasions. Being a prolific writer and outstanding orator he had to state subtle things regarding the matters of state. He was neither an advocate of "revolution" nor of "rebellion" and nor even of "Satyagraha. Still he had profound sym-

pathies with the national movement. He stuck to his patriotic views even in the teeth of strong opposition from the British Raj. He supported national cause in some of his lectures delivered in Oxford. He personally knew all the Indian leaders of his times including Mahatma Gandhi and they all had respect for his scholarship.

Ideologically speaking he was committed to ideas of Democracy. He decried casteism. He abhorred communalism. He hated narrow brand of nationalism. He condemned Fascism. He had opposed those schools of Socialism which denied the freedom of the individual. All these political beliefs were flowing from his idealistic considerations.

His writings confirm that he had a heroic heart. We find him passionately loving life and that is diffused in all of his speeches and writings. At times it strikes, as if, the writer in him is terribly daring. Like many great Hindu leaders of recent past he also admires three fold activities of the human beings. "Gyana Marga" the path of knowledge and illumination, "Bhagti Marga" the path of faith and devotion, and "Karma Marga" the path of work, service and sacrifice. Knowledge without devotion cannot blaze. Devotion alone may lead to madness. Correct actions are possible only if these are supported by correct knowledge and then by right devotion. Life of righteousness and progress is possible only by weaving the findings all these three paths in a suitable pattern.

Learning of science and technology as a profession is something different from their understanding and application in our day to-day life. The latter is more important for the average men and women. Dr. Radhakrishnan was respecter of science and scientific thinking even in the domain of religion, but idealist in him was too strong. He believed that universe had meaning and even value. People should align themselves with great ideals and that would work as driving forces. In the process some directions would be set in their lives. Certain ends to be achieved in life are to be proposed. Human life has short span and is, therefore, very precious. It should not be lost in idle or thoughtless or meaningless pursuits. It should not be eaten up by the dull routine of daily living.

It is very interesting to note that his love for religion is not blind. It is clear that his reliance on scientific knowledge is

more than that of scriptures when he says, "The text books of the past are not of much help in solving the problems of the present. Any attempt to interpret ancient scriptures to suit modern demands may show reverence for the past but not intellectual honesty". He advises that religious men should avoid criticising scientific thought. Although he had been a religious man himself, he did not feel offended if the scientists had criticised religious taboos, or superstitions or thoughts or even institutions. At the same time he refused to take it lying down. He did not lend unqualified support to the onward march of science and technology. He was conscious of their dark side too. Their disastrous effects could not be overlooked in the twentieth century. He calls upon the people not to become subservients of advancing sciences. He had well realised the inadequacy of science and his main emphasis remained on the fact that the religious spirit of man should not evaporate. He looks at the "live-limbs" of the Indian thought. According to science, this universe has no useful purpose to serve but the idealist in Radhakrishnan hits back with full force. Well, if his position cannot be defended by the stowaways of scientific thought, they can not say that he was not talking sense. Man is a subject. He should lead and dictate the scope of his life. Ultimate power of deciding the uses of science should remain with him. He should make use of the discoveries of science as a master. He should not become its underling. For all practical purposes science is an amoral force. It at once increases human powers to construct and destroy. It is left to man as to how he should interact with the worlds of science and technology.

While perusing the social history of India, we find that the conditions of womanhood were as miserable over here as in many other parts of the world. Their social status was low. Men could marry number of times and there were no legal or social permission confirming such rights for the women. Still in the domain of Indian religious and spiritual thinking women enjoyed fairly respectable position.

This privilege goes to India and India alone where God could be worshipped even as a "female deity". There had been woman saints and scholars too who left their mark in the history of the land. Woman is not presented in Indian history as an article of pleasure or luxury. She is a mother, a relationship

of worship, a sister symbol of honour, a wife multipurpose companion, a daughter in whose services father should live and die. These are our sociological rocks on which Indian women stand even to-day. With the changing economic conditions they are playing important roles in our present day public life. Indian women enjoy more prestige than that of their counterparts in the rest of the world. Over indulgence in sex is not permissible in any religion, but in India there had been more of strictness. Dr. Radhakrishnan supports the application of restraint in the matter of sex. He believes in the anticipation of woman. He never approves the idea that the Hindu wife has no right to work out her fortunes. He upholds monogamy. For him sanctity of marriage does not rest on reciting mantras or in the act of marriage. Married life itself is more important since it calls for certain domestic virtues, the integrity of family and rearing of children.

Unfortunately, most of modern Indian thinkers had conveniently avoided the detailed discussions in the matter of sex. They had believed it too explosive, and as a result we are still awaiting exhaustive studies in this direction. Acharya Rajneesh is the first great Indian thinker who has given us his studied views on the subject. Dr. Radhakrishnan had of course, not much to say.

He was a teacher of logic. He believed that the knowledge was either conceptual or perceptual or intuitive. It depends on the situation which side of it, is to be used under given circumstances. Plotinus used to say that the sense perceptions were below us, logical reasonings were with us and spiritual apprehensions were above. It has been a matter of common experience that the integral insight helps reasoning to be more illuminating. There are certain areas of consciousness which remain beyond the horizons of reasoning. So what strikes there is not just idle dreaming rather a "reality in integrity".

Dr. Radhakrishnan notes with courage and conviction that intuitive thinking is certainly a matter of high order. He admits the role played by analytical powers of man in the march of civilisation but still places "intuition" at more respectable place in the scheme of thinking. It is true, that it is unbeaten path. It is a journey in intellectual wanderings and spiritual excursions. It is just diving deep in the ocean of mind. Its pro-

duce may be in its raw form to begin with but it may endure the tests of further scrutiny. On the examination it might prove superior to analytical thinking.

It is obviously not the prerogative of the fools and knaves. Something begins to flow out of human mind after a long effort expended in extensive and intensive learning and training. It would take care of the elements of logical knowledge as far as possible since that remains the base of the intuition being something foundational. So intuitive knowledge does not contradict logical reasoning rather helps it, to be more useful, deeper and richer. Just as, intellect cannot repudiate instinct any more than intuition can deny logical reasoning.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was neither a yogi like Shri Aurobindo nor a saint like Maharishi Ramana. He was all a thinker. He was too much intellectualistic and common reader runs away from his books. Although he himself was more a scholar than a man of action, yet we find that he strikes a balance of contemplation and action as an ideal for the individuals. The element of universality is very strong in his writings. Being a Hindu individualist he at times appears to be a "lonely pilgrim" on the journey of "unfettered" exploration. Prof. G.P. Longer places him amongst the towering personalities of the Western thought by stating, "Less ponderous than Royce, less meticulous than Bradley, less involved than Hegel, he (Radhakrishnan) had made idealism flow from a deep spring. By comparison, Eucken is provincial and Keyserling trivial. Not since Fichte and Schelling has there been such a precipitate stream of inspiration".

Chapter V

Writer and Speaker

We have already made it clear that Dr. Radhakrishnan was an Indian through and through. Whether he was teaching at Oxford or lecturing in the World organisations he confirmed his Indianness in all of his activities. He had written more than hundred books. These are in English. We have already given the important details as to when these were attempted in the long span of his life.

Their style, therefore, cannot be generalised as one pattern. Man carries on changing especially when he is living a full life. It is a stupendous task in itself that his each and every book should be comprehensively surveyed and their merits be discovered and rediscovered. The generalisations being made in this small work are obviously risky, but there is no other alternative. Detailed analysis of each book of Dr. Radhakrishnan is the task of an institution or of a university. Some voluntary institute or public body should be formed. The irony is that such tasks are undertaken only for those who are useful to some political elements.

His mother tongue was Telegu. This was the language spoken at home when he was a child. English was, of course, taught in the Mission school when he prosecuted his studies as a child and then as a boy. It was a period when the educated Indians were required to be proficient in English since the rulers preferred them in the service to those who had specialised in Indian language.

The talent of native languages was wilfully discouraged by the British Raj as that was very much rooted in the Indian soil and could not have been well disposed to the foreign rule. That was the historic milieu when Gandhi, Nehru and Radhakrishnan were emerging on the national scene. All of them

could not help specialising in English for expressing themselves to the foreign rulers as well as to the educated masses of India. The British Raj has disappeared but the servitude to English language persists till date. We believe that it is a window through which we see outside. Then it is a language which is understood in all parts of the country by a microscopic minority. Its international position is a great excuse for English Knowing minority to maintain its hold over the million and millions of our countrymen who do not know this language. Gandhi and Nehru had the advantage of proceeding to England as young boys for higher studies, but Radhakrishnan was not that fortunate. He was to learn English like thousands of other Indians in his own land.

Young Radhakrishnan was destined to live under the local influences. On the national scene it appears that the personality of Swami Vivekananda appealed to him most as a thinker and as an orator. In 1893 Swamiji had earned lot of appreciation for his epochal addresses in the U.S.A, Their echoes could be heard all over India for number of years. Many of our Indians used to believe as if he had conquered the American society. All Americans had become his disciples.

Tagore was yet to rise on the Indian firmament. Had Radhakrishnan met the said poet, the latter would have been advised not to write in English. Tagore had once chastised Late Shri Balraj Sahni, a noted film star and a writer not to write in English. By implication, Tagore had rendered a great service to the Punjabi language since Mr. Sahni started writing in his mother tongue thereafter.

The irony of history is that Indians had been learning English for the last two hundred years, and the number of English knowing Indians has increased beyond all proportions after independence in 1947. It is the medium of instruction in almost all the institutes of higher learning, but even then it can be safely said that there is hardly a microscopic minority of the educated Indians who can express themselves in English satisfactorily. Tagore made a judicious decision of writing his epochal works in Bengali. In the process, he enriched his mother tongue to the degree that it can today vie with the most advanced languages of the world.

Iqbal was an other great literary giant of the subconti-

nent in the early decades of this century. He was born and brought up in the Punjab but started writing his poetry in Urdu in the morning of this century. He was inspired by the national movement and wished that his message should reach all over the country. His language was simple, straight, direct and fresh. Its appeal was immense. As he grew in years his ideals underwent a sea change. He started writing in Persian. He opted for this language with a clear ambition that his literary works were now meant for the entire Muslim world. He had also a belief that in terms of art and aesthetics, Persian was superior to Urdu. Unfortunately he was not aware of the fact that he could be an expert of Indian Persian but hardly of modern Persian. Aging Iqbal had realised his mistake and then switched back to Urdu, but this return did not cut much ice since his style continued to be over-Persianised. Iqbal's service to Persian is great but loss to Urdu is greater and to Punjabi is the greatest.

Young Radhakrishnan seems to have decided to use English as a language to wield his pen. He took it up as a challenge to become outstanding writer and speaker of his times in this language. All this could not have developed overnight. It requires dogged efforts from the individual to develop a style. Since he had been consciously avoiding to discuss the details of his personal life, that does not mean that his pains had not been there in developing grand style for stating his views.

He talks more of his beliefs and ideas but not about himself. Even if, it is taken for granted that genius and talent had been there, still nothing significant could have been achieved without persistent efforts of the individual.

His principal objective was to be read and understood by the Western Scholars. He aspired to teach them the Indian philosophy in the language that they could have appreciated. It was, as such fair on his part to interact with them in English. A few ideas of Indian thought were already made available to them by the Christian missionaries but the latter could not help being biased against Hinduism. These religious men had come to this country nor for civilising the natives rather for proselytising the millions and millions. They had neither patience nor will to understand those Indian scriptures that were written thousands of years ago. This was a difficult work. One had to submerge for number of

years in the books and only then some partial understanding could have been possible.

Radhakrishnan did not mean to defend ancient Indian thought rather asserts its relevance wherever possible. He knew that his Indian readership in English would be, though limited, yet intellectually equipped to understand what he had to say. His overall task was arduous. He had to master his subject through Sanskrit and through other Indian languages of the by-gone ages. All the data so collected was to be transferred to his unconscious. This long period of his incubation appears to be that when he was teaching at Presidency College, Madras. Mathew Arnold had correctly said somewhere "Greatness in a spiritual condition worthy to excite, interest and admiration and the outward proof of possessing greatness in that we excite love, interest and admiration." Radhakrishnan put in extraordinary efforts to attain that level of intellect where self assurance becomes something natural to man.

His objectives were very high. He was not simply to defend Hinduism from the heinous attacks of certain bureaucrats and missionaries. He was not to indulge in polemics of their religious positions. At the same time, he was to be practical down to the earth. He had conveyed that all religions aimed at the same central points of the human destiny. Their differences were superficial. His ego was though wounded by the mendacious propaganda of the missionaries, yet he did not retaliate. His early writings do confirm some aggressiveness in this presentation as if, he did not tolerate the derogatory remarks of the missionaries who had the support of the Government. Gradually he was mollified.

The life of a writer cannot be divided into strict periods, but it is clear in case of Dr. Radhakrishnan that he moved to maturity very fast. Men cannot claim that they have no likes or dislikes, but those who wish to succeed acquire the art of self-imposed restraints. So he also turned balanced and stable around thirties of his life. Although he did not strictly adhere to his early beliefs, yet we find that there is some sort of consistency in his core thinking. There are no contradictions and no vacillations. He used to grasp his material thoroughly well, and at the same time he knew what to say and how to say.

At times, he had to discuss many intricate issues of philoso-

phy but his imposing success lies in the fact that he could easily record his views in clear and lucid words which do not create strain for the readers. His overall presentation of ideas is less analytical but it is more revealing. Even then, he remains a philosopher and not a prophet.

During the long period of his preparation, he seems to have read so much that we fail to locate the important writers who had influenced him most in the art of writing. For those years of his life he had certainly read many books of history, literature and philosophy mostly written in the nineteenth century. All that gets reflected in his style which turns meticulous, balanced and comprehensive distinctly different from modern stylists. It also strikes that his perception was also vivid and sustained.

Finally he had reached that level in the technique of writing English language to which very few Indians could climb in the past five generations. In the process, he brought lot of respectability to Indian English. Now, it has become a phenomenon that would last long. What he ultimately achieved could not have been possible by inspiration only, rather through hard work whose details are not known to us. There could have been few Indians other than him whose knowledge and understanding of Indian thought was very profound, but none of them had reached his art of delineating details of philosophy so effectively in English language.

It would be childish to compare him with Churchill or Russell in the matter of style, but he was one of the great prose writers in English of our times. He had acquired a place for himself in the list of the eminent stylists. His works were hailed as classics when he had been just in his forties. We find most of them even today rubbing their shoulders in those shelves of the libraries, where classics of all times are arranged. They all appear to have been written many many years ago and lie as noble ruins of great human learning. The fault does not lie with the author in Radhakrishnan, it is rather the quickly changing character of readership of our times since it is no longer interested in serious things of life. After all philosophy and the allied subjects he had written do not equip a person to become a professional. He prepares to make our minds intelligent, robust and healthy. Such kind of books are not popular in our times.

We have already pointed out the advantage that Gandhi and Nehru had over Radhakrishnan of having foreign education. They had one serious limitation also. They were so absorbed in the struggle of national movement that they had neither time nor desire to embellish what they had to say. They were in the thick of struggles and their writings were for all kind of people who were to be inspired for participating in different political, social and economic agitations. So whatever they had written is simple and forthright. This is also difficult task at its own place.

Simplicity is undoubtedly a great merit of a writer, but it cannot be adhered to at the cost of the content to be provided in a particular work. Then certain subjects are very tough. Their meanings get lost in confusion if the effort is directed towards over simplification. Einstein was once asked as to why his formulas of gravitation had been so lengthy, so difficult and unlike those of Newton's formula. He replied, "If you are to describe the truth, leave elegance to tailor".

Dr. Radhakrishnan was one of the most learned men of this century. He was addressing the knowledgeable of the world. His source material of writing was extraordinary. It was written or compiled thousands of years ago and its essence was to be conveyed to our times. Whatever had been considered irrelevant by him was not to be inducted so that the readership was not inconvenienced. He carried on the burden of many philosophies in his head but that too, so easily. He educates and advises and even provokes and shocks at times. His total personality was so developed and the people around used to feel as if, he had natural talent of speaking and writing from the depths of his mind. His eloquence was fine. As a stylist he could be compared with Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Bergson.

At times, it strikes, as if we are not reading philosophy from his books, rather creative prose of a distinguished order. He gives a new life to the long forgotten philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism. His sentences are fast. His ideas are courageous. His approach to life is dynamic. His similes are lucid. His details are absorbing. His scholarship is profound. His erudition is of very high standard. His choice of words is judicious. His vocabulary is enormous. His abilities are strong, visual, fluent and original. He has a method, precision and exactness. There is symmetry and balance. His diction is powerful. He is

conscious of the rhythm of his words. He combines poetic warmth with reasoning and feeling with philosophic detachment. There is power and movement, light and knowledge in his presentation. The making of his sentences and then passages he orders, confirm his broad vision and superior general intelligence. He was always conscious where he had been leading his audience or readership. His clay was words, he packs them with unusual force and with extraordinary purpose.

We happen to live in a different milieu to-day. We find more books, more magazines, and more reading material all around, but the temper of readership is quite different. People have no time. Serious readers are not available beyond the orbits of the Research Departments of universities and institutes and they too, do not study as a matter of interest rather as a professional compulsion.

We generally meet casual readers who believe that they have many other things to do. They just can not stand his works. They have no patience to read that stuff which calls for total concentration.

There are, of course, some bright young students in colleges and universities having leftist orientation, they do not find Radhakrishnan inspiring. They have their own masters of ideologies. They fear Dr. Radhakrishnan and thus refuse to touch his massive prose. According to them, Dr. Radhakrishnan was neither a revolutionary nor even a prochanger by any stretch of imagination. He did not apply his mind seriously to the social, economic and political problems of the country. Many Indian writers were influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1917 but not Dr. Radhakrishnan.

This criticism is not fully justified. Dr. Radhakrishnan was a teacher of very high ability and integrity. Those who had been attending to his classes always spoke very high of him. His main emphasis had all along been learning, thinking and imparting knowledge through his writings and speeches. The question at times may arise whether he was seriously sensitive to the dynamics and tempo of his age. The answer to this question is "Yes". His eyes were always set on the future. He may be subjective in his arguments but he does not give the impression of being backward looking. Invariably he defends his beliefs by means of logic and not through scriptures. He caters intellect

and jumps over to the pastures of intuition.

His choice of words for explaining different situations is superb. Some of his sentences are mines of wisdom which can be used as quotations by our generation. If only a hundred of these could survive for a century or so, Dr. Radhakrishnan would earn suitable place for himself in the list of great thinkers of the world for all times. His works should be scrutinised and the selection of suitable passages should be entrusted to a responsible Committee of Scholars and that should be printed as a text book for use in our high schools and colleges. The work so compiled should be translated in the national languages so that the people might understand him well.

Although he finds place with religious men of thought, yet he was not a theologian. He reminds us to think and search. He suggests discipline and selflessness. He is at once a humanist and a democrat. There are very few who could vie with him as to how to combine sensitivity, perception and craftsmanship in the art of writing. Most of his works have been well written. It would be too much to say that all of them are master pieces but it can be safely asserted that these can not just be tasted. These can not be swallowed, these are rather to be chewed and digested. There had been other Indian thinkers but none of them reaches him in the art of communication.

Major reason for this distinction is not simply his scholarship rather his unusual quality of expression. Philosophy is, otherwise, a dull subject, but he renders it with passion and excitement. That affects the whole situation. We go to him and read him speaking about the past, reflecting about the present and visualising about future.

Chapter VI

Administrator and Statesman

Dr. Radhakrishnan was not a politician either by profession or by inclination. He did not go to jails. He had never rubbed his shoulders with the Gandhians or socialists or politicians of other brands. He had never addressed peasants and working classes. He did not write for them also. He had rather, kept himself, at some distance from the masses.

His apologists might claim that he was a moderate and closer to men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Tagore, Gokhale and others, but it is a travesty of fact. His detractors may assert that he was respecter of British Raj. This is not the truth. In fact, he was a great scholar like Late Sir C.V. Roman and Shri Visheshvarya. He was all absorbed in his own intellectual pursuits and wished to serve his motherland in the tradition of those Acharyas who were learned men of great distinction. He deliberately did not pick up the row with the establishment otherwise his concernment with the political affairs of the country was genuine. He had all regards for Gandhi Ji and Nehru. He had strong sympathies with the national movement being led by them. Still he was different from Russell and Nehru in the sense that he had no love for agitations.

Late Shri Jayaprakash Narayan (Lok Nayak) recalls how the works of Dr. Radhakrishnan were read by the Satyagrahis and revolutionaries in the prisons, "There was hardly a serious minded freedom fighter in prison in the thirties and forties who did not go through his volumes on "Indian philosophy" or the essays on the "Bhagwad Gita," the Hindu view of Life etc" Although he had taught very large number of students during his life time, yet he had left no disciples. He had left no sect behind.

We have opened many institutes and universities in different parts of the country, but Dr. Radhakrishnan's admirers had no political weight otherwise some university or institute could have been set up in his memory. Unfortunately he had no popular base. He had no followers who could have claimed a respectable place for him in the modern Indian history. His birthday is hailed as a Teachers' Day, but it is not enough. Do we ever remember him?

It is on records that when Lord Irwin wished to recommend him for Knighthood, he consulted the Governor of Bengal, who opposed the idea on the basis of police reports received against Dr. Radhakrishnan. The city of Calcutta was not simply a centre of learning and culture, it was the fountain head of many social, religious political and revolutionary movements. Dr. Radhakrishnan had spent many precious years of his academic life over there.

Even when he was in Madras as a teacher, he had shown interest in the political developments of the country. As an idealist, he had always aspired that something should be done for the country and society. People should rise and sort out problems by their own efforts. Human effort was very important but he had nowhere stated what exactly should be done by the individual in the given circumstances. He perhaps believed that working out of complete blue print would generate restraints and constraints.

As soon as he came down to Calcutta in 1921, his first priority was obviously to establish himself in his own department of the University. He was soon acknowledged as a master mind by the students and the staff around. Sir Asutosh had by then realised that Dr. Radhakrishnan was capable of attending to other important things relating to the University of Calcutta.

So some work regarding the management of the university was assigned to him. Dr. Radhakrishnan had neither practical experience nor aptitude for administration, still he welcomed the opportunity that had come in his way and gave the commendable account of himself. Although Capital was shifted to New Delhi in the year 1911, Calcutta was still retaining its personality as a very important city. There was more awareness over here than in other parts of the country. Dr. Radhakrishnan was quietly trying to understand what was happening around. Gradually

he came to know many people who mattered in the political affairs of Bengal as well as of the country.

He was offered the Vice-Chancellorship of Andhra University. The administrative experience acquired at the university of Calcutta proved to be of great advantage to him in the new situation. So he felt himself quite at home in discharging his new duties. It is true that all Indian Universities had not been the hot beds of political agitations, still the handling of youth had never been a simple affair. He set the university on firm foundation and by the time he had left its teething troubles were over. Thereafter he returned to Calcutta.

Meanwhile Late Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya requested him to take charge of the Banaras Hindu University. India was in ferment and the struggle of political independence had by then entered the decisive stage. Now the young students all over the country were restive for the political emancipation. The Banaras University was destined to play a leading role therein. Here Dr. Radhakrishnan had to perform a miraculous feat. The British Raj was not favourably disposed to this University. It was searching one alibi or the other for closing it down. The Government knew that although Dr. Radhakrishnan was not openly participating in the National Movement, yet he was for it. The direction of his sympathies were wellknown. Still there were a few bureaucrats who did not like to proceed against him since they were in know of his intellectual and academic contacts in the universities of Great Britain. They feared that any stern action against him would create sensation in their own country. In those difficult days Dr. Radhakrishnan had an occasion of meeting the Governor General of India for discussing the affairs of his University. It is on records, that he had displayed real statesmanship in persuading the Government for restraining its harsh actions against the said university.

G.B. Shaw had said somewhere, "He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches". Perhaps time had ultimately come for Dr. Radhakrishnan to prove the great dramatist wrong as he was to emerge on the national scene and play his destined role. His predilections in politics were quite different from those of Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah; still he proved them of great consequence.

He was not an opportunist but if some opportunity had come

in his way, he tried to seize it and proved himself to be competent enough for handling it. He perhaps knew the art of floating upstream better than many eminent politicians of his times. His first love was philosophy, second education and third had, of course, been politics; but the driving force behind all these passions was his quest of how to help the man to play his decisive role in constructing a great future.

India was liberated in the year 1947. On the historic night of 14-15 August 1947 Dr. Radhakrishnan addressed his countrymen, "Our national faults of character, our domestic despotism, our intolerance have assumed the different forms of. obscurantism, of narrowmindedness, of superstitions bigotry Our opportunities are great but let me warn you that when power outstrips ability, we will face evil days. We should develop competence and ability which would help us to utilise the opportunities which are now open to us. From tomorrow morning—from midnight today—we can no longer throw the blame on the British. We have to assume the responsibility ourselves for what we do. A Free India will be judged by the way in which it will serve the interests of a common man in the matter of food, clothing, shelter and social services. Unless we destroy corruption in high offices, root out every trace of nepotism, love for power, profiteering and blackmarketing which have spoiled the good name of this country in recent times, we will not be able to raise the standards of efficiency in administration as well as in the production and distribution of the goods of life". More than three decades have passed, it appears, as if, the message has been delivered by a great statesman of to-day.

The evils referred by him have increased beyond all proportions when compared with those times of 1947. Pandit Nehru was at the helm of the affairs. He knew the patriot in the "academic exterior" of Dr. Radhakrishnan. Pandit Ji got him inducted in the Constituent Assembly and his services were also made available to the UNESCO. Dr. Radhakrishnan had already some experience of League of nations. He had served on some of its committees. He had helped the UNESCO in its formative years in formulating sound policies for the future. He wished that this body should help in educating the peoples of the world regarding peace and unity. He rendered a great services to the world body by suggesting many great ideas. Some of them

had been implemented to a certain degree.

His remarkable eloquence used to enable august audience of the body spellbound. He used to speak like a statesman maintaining philosophic equanimity in the midst of stress and struggle. Each and every address he had delivered in those days was full of compassion and understanding. He echoed the universal spirit of his religion in the manner that it could arrest the attention of the peoples of the world.

Although he was very friendly with Pandit Nehru, yet they had serious ideological differences also. It was of course an era when differences could not divide the people. The meeting points namely sincerity, devotion and incorruptibility were strong binding forces. So Pandit Nehru requested Dr. Radhakrishnan to head the Education Commission and propose suitable reforms in the Educational System so that it could meet the future needs of the Indian Society.

It was a historic task to prepare the blueprints of new system required under the changed conditions. Our society is extremely complicated. There are innumerable contradictions. We find bold defenders of all nonsense but the supporters of right causes are by and large quiet or indifferent. Although a voluminous report was prepared as a document of learning under his Chairmanship, yet nothing spectacular has been actualised till date.

This does not surprise us since we know that such reports do not restructure the system. It is the mind of the man that is to be redesigned. Whatever was suggested therein seems to have been stated without adequate preparation. Bold ideas cannot be implemented easily. Government got it published. It is used as a reference book by the present day scholars of education. The irony of history is that men like Nehru and Dr. Radhakrishnan had been at the helm of the affairs of the country but they could not stamp out certain attitudes of the so called educated who had developed vested interest in maintaining status-quo in the field of education. The system introduced by Lord Macaulay is more or less in force even to-day. Some marginal changes can not be denied. The real breakthrough could not have been made till date. How could this be done in the year 1948 when the shadows of the British Raj were not at distance?

The foreign affairs were the first love of Pandit Nehru. He

wished that the free India should play its appropriate role in the international affairs. A country of this size could not have remained inconsequential. He had also been very keen since 1927 to lay the enduring foundations of the Indo-Soviet friendship. He had written then, "India and Russia are neighbours. India is an Asian State; and the USSR is a sprawling over Asia and Europe". Between two such neighbours there can be amity or enmity; indifference is out of question". Now India was free and Pandit Ji had an opportunity of realising his long cherished dream.

His farsighted eye did not pick up some seasoned diplomat to man the position of Ambassador in Moscow in the year 1949. Rather he asked Dr. Radhakrishnan to proceed there. Such entry to diplomacy for the novice could have been possible to the European princes of the nineteenth century, but Dr. Radhakrishnan was being deployed for different reason. He never posed himself to be a great thinker of India. He did not put on special graces of being a great man of his country. He did not ape the mannerisms of other diplomats around him. In fact, he did not bother for the protocols which are deemed as the essentials for the diplomatic service. Dr. Radhakrishnan was to perform a very difficult feat i.e. to transform the mind of a leader like that of Stalin regarding India. He contacted this great giant of modern history on certain occasions and tried to convince him about the emergence of India and its role in the futurity of human race. Here was the rise of a power committed to peace and friendship even under the most trying circumstances.

Dr. Radhakrishnan could be the only person who could have spoken with Stalin with a conviction of equality. Dr. Hiran Mookerjee dramatically describes the meetings and relations of Stalin and Dr. Radhakrishnan "Understanding of a man who had been tampered, but also somewhat twisted in the fire of cruelly protracted revolutionary ordeals, came easily to Radhakrishnan. It is on record that he left Stalin, he wished him well and tapped him gently on his shoulder (as is indeed his wont where he meets his friends) a gesture as man to man which the all powerful Stalin had not perhaps experienced for a long stretch of years, a gesture, which, the reports state brought tears almost to the eyes of that reputed man of Steel."

In fact, aging Stalin did not like the return of Dr. Radha-

krishnan to Delhi, but that could not be helped. More important opportunities now awaited the Indian philosopher at home.

He was now elevated to the position of Vice-President of the Indian Union. He did not belong to any particular group or sect or party, yet he was called upon to hold this office of political power. Our political bosses showed ample foresight courage and generosity and gave away this position to a philosopher, otherwise it should have been their preserve. In doing so, a very noble tradition was set up in the history of Modern India. As a Vice-President he was to act as a Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Here again Dr. Radhakrishnan was not a parliamentarian as such. He did not know the rules of the game but the element of common sense was very strong in him. He conducted the proceedings of the august body with skill, tact and good humour. The members used to look at him with respect and affection. They had explicit faith in his impartiality. They listened to him very attentively as if, they had been the students of Post-graduate classes being addressed by a senior professor of a University. As Vice-President he had plenty of time for making speeches inside and outside the country. He inspired his countrymen to rise to the occasion so that, they should discharge duties with courage. He gave them will to struggle, vision to foresee, detachment to experience and sincerity to practise. He had gone abroad on goodwill tours. He was convinced that peace would be established only if the ideals of world unity were rooted in the minds of men. Wars were not imposed by the Almighty. These had been there in the minds of men. So the defences were to be built-up in the minds of men. He wished that the bridges of understanding and friendship should be set up between the East and the West. The cobwebs of misunderstandings amongst the nations should be removed as quickly as possible.

In the year 1957, Pandit Nehru wished that late Dr. Rajendra Prasad should not contest for the second term of the President ship of the Indian Union and Dr. Radhakrishnan should succeed to that position. But somehow, congress party was not enthusiastic for this changeover. The democrat in Pandit Nehru could not press for the showdown on the issue. Dr. Radhakrishnan was obviously disappointed and planned to return to the academic world. Pandit Nehru prevailed upon him not to press the issue further and as a result Dr. Radhakrishnan agreed to have another term of Vice Presidency. Even in this position he had considerable power to wield, but he had perhaps no ambition to do so. He used to scold power hungry politicians on various occasions and advised them they should not drown themselves in the seas of corruption.

Late Sardar K.M. Pannikar had stated regarding his person-

ality some-where, "His outstanding quality has always appeared to me to be his burning faith in the freedom of mind, his refusal to bend his knee either to authority or to dogma. It is the liberated mind which while accepting the spiritual truths, does not allow itself to be dominated by the slogan of the movement or by the favoured philosophies of the illiterate, that is his ideal. It is what makes him a being apart in the modern world, for he is not bound by allegiance to passing political creeds to parties and factions".

He had carried the spirit of India beyond its shores and made the world feel that a new India was born for strengthening the ideals of peace and non-violence. Some of his addresses, messages and writings of this period can be compared with the best of the kind ever delivered by the great minds of modern world. As an idealist he had an instinctive loathing for war. He wished that peace should prevail and wars should be ruled out from the future history. Pandit Nehru had remarked for Dr. Radhakrishnan "Wherever he went, his words brought comfort to the people, and his own wisdom brought people nearer to each other".

After completing his two terms as Vice President he was finally chosen as President of the Indian Union. This was undoubtedly a great honour to be the first citizen of India and that too without being a member of a political party. This was obviously something unusual and in accordance with prophetic design of Plato, "That city, wherein those who are to rule are least anxious for office, must have the best and most stable constitution. When office becomes a thing to be fought for, the civil and internal strife destroys the combatants and the whole state with them" Well, India has a glorious tradition of such men in its history to whom the ideals of nonpossession and non-attachment were live-realities. Power was not ruthlessly sought for, and if it had come in the way of right individuals, it was not used for grinding their own axes.

The West was, of course, excited over his taking over as President. Pearl S. Buck said, "I congratulate India". Bertrand Russell paid glowing tribute to India, "It is an honour to philosophy that Dr. Radhakrishnan should be President of a great country, such as, the Republic of India and I, as a philosopher, take special pleasure in it. Plato aspired for the philosophers to become kings and it is tribute to India that it should have philosopher as President". Dr. Radhakrishnan's position was thus acknowledged all over the world and that elevated the prestige of India too.

When he visited Great Britain in June 1963, Daily Telegraph sums him up, "No living head of state in the world approaches his intellectual distinction. In his writings he has been the out-

standing interpreter to the West of the thoughts of the East concerning the ultimate mystery of man. That such a man should have been elevated by a great people to the first place in its polity rather than one immersed in the controversies of politics, is remarkable evidence that India sees the society of which the president is supreme representative, as something greater than and including the State".

He was a man in the tradition of Mahavira, Buddha, Chishti, Nanak, Kabir and so on. The Rastrapati Bhavan is not a centre of ruthless power. It is a place where the head of the State lives as a figure of poise and dignity, unconcerned with petty things of life.

A great thinker of our times was living there. He was more concerned with the thing of spirit. It is not something external, solid and mechanical. It is the inward aspiration of the peoples' hearts. It is the imaginative interpretation of human life and the perception of the mystery of human existence. Here was a lonely pilgrim of spirit who refused to believe that there could be no meeting points between Marxist Communism and the traditional Anglo-American democracy. He says, "possibly many doctrines seem opposites may on closer examination turn out to be distincts which are compatible with each other".

In October 1962 Chinese attacked the Northern Frontiers of India in a massive way. Indian army was badly mauled. The Indian leadership was exposed and shaken. People were demoralised since they could not believe that they had been so weak in the matters of their defence. Pandit Nehru was believed to be a man of very strong nerve yet he was found all shocked. His health began to fail thereafter. Dr. Radhakrishnan maintained philosophical equanimity and had faced the strains of those difficult times. Soon after that India was attacked by Pakistan. Late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister of India then. Being elder statesman Dr. Radhakrishnan helped the new Prime Minister with his wit, wisdom and perspective.

As a President of the Indian Union, he enthused his countrymen to face the situation with courage and determination, but at the same time, he was careful not to generate unnecessary panic and war hysteria. He was against retaliation. He wished that India should retain high moral standards even under the life and death struggles. "We should", he said at Bangalore, "never depart from our path of truth. If necessary we will sacrifice even the country for the sake of truth, but we will never sacrifice truth for the sake of our country".

He extended the hand of love towards the people of Pakistan. "We have", said Dr. Radhakrishnan, "also to avoid any form of hatred for the people of Pakistan who are our kith and kin. Friendship with them has always been our primary objective. It

is not our true desire to hurt Pakistan to save India. Our commitment to peace is wellknown". He added further "there are more things which bind us together than keep us apart. In this dreadful situation let us have a few moments of introspection and make our spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice.". He advised Shastri Ji to go to Tashkant with an open mind. He had then suggested in one of his speeches, "Any fanaticism, any prejudice, is opposed to the scientific spirit. A scientific spirit is the habit of mind in which one must not have a rigid hypothesis".

To sum up it is true that he did not go to jails. He did not parade in the streets. He did not use students for political campaigning. He did not seek votes. He had no political following. He had left no group of followers behind. He had no mass base. He was not a Gandhian. He had been closer to Nehru as man but he was not a Nehruvian. Still he was a patriot through and through. He loved India but he loved India of savants and saints more. He was a democrat by conviction and for him "democracy means the reconciliation of differences and not the obliteration of differences".

He was a champion of international understanding and peace. His broadcast of August 1965 rings in our ears, "Our world is now unified as never before. We should see to it that disputes are settled by law and reason. All forms of violence are symbols of human failure. As responsible human beings in this nuclear age, it should be our objective to work for a policy of peace, friendship and disarmament". Dr. Radhakrishnan was a statesman of distinction though not an activist. He had the wisdom of the centuries, knowledge of his own times, and imagination for future. The idealist and visionary in him had looked far and far in the domain of future, "We as a nation will grow better, grow chastened, and will become more unified, with one common purpose of preserving human dignity and helping the onward march of humanity. The changes that are now taking place in the world have brought out the consciousness that we belong to one tribe of mankind. What happens in Cuba and China is not merely of interest to those people but to the whole world. This world's consciousness is therefore growing steadily, silently and imperceptibly. Great revolutions took place silently. They did not come with tom tom and fan fare. They grow in the minds of the people silently. It is that kind of silent growth we are seeing hearing".



