

# “Hinduism” in The Hindu View of Life by

## Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Rahul Rathee

Masters of Arts (English) Kurukshetra University, Haryana

### ABSTRACT

**Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an Indian philosopher and statesman. He served as the 2nd President of India and as the 1st Vice President of India. One of the most distinguished twentieth-century scholars of comparative religion and philosophy, Radhakrishnan's philosophy was grounded in Advaita Vedanta, reinterpreting this tradition for a contemporary understanding. He defended Hinduism against what he called "uninformed Western criticism", contributing to the formation of contemporary Hindu identity. He has been influential in shaping the understanding of Hinduism, in both India and the west, and earned a reputation as a bridge-builder between India and the West.**

**Keywords: Philosopher, Hindu, Hinduism, Religion.**

### INTRODUCTION

The Hindu View Of Life is a philosophical text by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. This text is based on the lecture-series addressed by him at the Manchester College, Oxford. The picture of India was not good in the eyes of the westerners. Therefore so as to clarify the vision of Hinduism, he addressed this ‘Upton Lecture’ in Manchester College, so as to defend against uninformed criticism and explaining its inherent characteristics. Radhakrishnan was aware about the facts which ought to be clarified or without which the Hindu view is incomplete. In the Text, S.Radhakrishnan has stated the principle of Hinduism. It is an endeavor to indicate the central motives of the Hindu faith and shows its way of approach to it. This text is a relic in the world of philosophy. The text is composed of the four chapters each chapter is a delivered attempt to clarify the vision about Hinduism. In the first two chapters of the text Radhakrishnan has given the nature and content of the Hinduism toward these conflicts. He believe that Hinduism is a kind of experience it insight into the nature of reality (darshana) or experience of reality (Anubhav). Third chapter deals with the theory of Maya, talks about the ethical principles.

Theory of karma has two aspects – The Individual aspects or the principle of Ashrams, Another is social aspect or the Varna Theory. In the third lecture S.Radhakrishnan has talked about the Hinduism along with the principles of Ashrams, In the final chapter he has discussed about the social issues related to the caste and the class system, also discussed racial conflict and provide solutions to all of these problems. He finds that the racial problems in India are unique, caste system in India is complex in origin.

S.Radhakrishnan is known for his commentaries on the Bhagvad Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras where he shows his ability to convert the incomprehensible into a meaningful. The Hindu view of life by S.Radhakrishnan is considered as a relic in the world of philosophy. S.Radhakrishnan was aware of the usual criticism leveled against the Hindu religious practice and beliefs by missionaries. He has painted the problems of nature and destiny of men, also portrait importance of spirituality in the very nature of men and men's spiritual development. In this Philosophical text S.Radhakrishnan has explained the origin, development of Hindu religion and analyzes Hindu way of life. The four lecture

deals with different aspects of 'Hinduism'. For Him, Hinduism is not an internally recognized word, but the term 'Hindu' has territorial significance, not the creedal one, implies "residence in well defined geographical areas." The people on the Indian of the Sindhu River were called Hindu by the Persian and later by the Western Invaders. Hinduism is not a sectarian creed or a form of thought but a way of life believing in the unity in diversity. Hinduism is a scientific religion based on facts to which one reaches through institution or religious experience. For many, Hinduism is without content, S.Radhakrishnana believes that if it has content then it has altered from age to age. The ease of Hinduism is that it has steadily absorbed the customs and the ideas of the people without whom it has come in contact.

If we talk about the Hindu Religion or the Religious Experience, In Hindu Religion is not the acceptance of the academic abstractions or celebrations of ceremonies, but Religion is a kind of experience. Religion is insight into the nature of reality (Darshana) or the Experience of reality (Anubhava). Religious experience is self certifying and depends on faith, institution which depends upon experience rather than on Authority just like in Christianity. To define 'Faith' Radhakrishnan has quoted western critic Wesley "Faith is the vision of soul the power by which spiritual things are apprehended. To transform the religious experience gained through vision of soul into reality we depend upon the intellectual account of experience." Therefore we depend upon Vedas. Vedas are the chief sacred scriptures of the Hindus. Vedas are not so much dogmatic but capable of being re-experienced. Vedas are co-existence of institution and reason. In Hindu thought there is no breach between reason and institution. Hinduism is a living tradition experimental and admits others points of view. Unlike others religions which believes in absolutism and dismisses other's experiences as illusionary, Hinduism readily admits others points of view and consider them to be worthy of attention. Like in Christianity which accepts only a particular kind of spiritual experience. S.Radhakrishnan has a belief that a tradition which doesn't grow means its followers are spiritually dead. Hinduism tradition is an organism with steady growth of insight and experimenting with new forms developing new ideals.

In Second lecture, S.Radhakrishnan has discussed about the conflicts of religion and the attitude of Hinduism toward it. He says that 'though different religions have inherent differences in formulations of mystical experiences, Hinduism is universal in believing in one Reality God'. He means that God is one but images and descriptions of God vary from person to person, religion to religion. A seer who has seen the Divine doesn't attach importance to 'outward forms'. For him the exterior reality doesn't matter. Through his institutions, faith he gains the experience which is an apprehension of the spiritual things. The true seer is gifted with a universality of outlook. He is convinced of the inexhaustibility of the nature of God and the number of its manifestation.

"Hinduism is not a fanatic faith in a inflexible creed". Hinduism absorbs everything that enters into it, magic or animism and raises it to a higher level. Comprehensive charity, respect and goodwill for other creed are note of Hinduism. Hinduism is worlds' first missionary religion in that it take into it all fold non-Aryan creeds and beliefs without any mission to converts humanity to its opinion. It is a religion of reconciliation and assimilation incorporates all good and bad but it cuts unsatisfying elements. It has large comprehensive unity of livings with fixed orientation. Hindu method of religions reforms are essentially democratic in nature, they accepts every cult and bringing out a change in its content and not merely in its beliefs in transformation by assimilation, suggestion and persuasion and not by force. The aim of the reformer is to cure the defect not to criticize the view. This aspect leads to realization of the incorporate supreme by altering the bias of mind. Hindu religion has a belief in gradual but continual evolution. Hindu method of the conflicts has been criticized as indifferent as it enables every group to retain its past associations and preserves its individuality and interests. It doesn't believe in exclusive absolutism, i.e. bringing about a mechanical uniformity of belief. It has a notion that religion is not correct belief but righteous living.

Though Hindu method is perfect, it has bound together multitudinous sects and devotions into a common scheme. Radhakrishnan's belief of tolerance of other belief is the only solution to achieve peace in the world.

Unity of religion not in common creed

But in common Quest.



We should all look at different religions not as incompatibles but as complementary. The more religious we grow the more tolerant of diversity we will be. Hinduism is not a dogmatic creed but a vast and complex unified mass of spiritual tradition.

Therefore we may say that The Hindu View of Life is an impartial and rational account of Hindu religion. The Text points out differences between Hinduism and other religions but avoids unnecessary criticism of other religion. Its flexibility, tolerance, democratic approach is specialty of Hindu religion. Hinduism insists not on religious conformity but on a spiritual and ethical way of life. It taught that 'Dharma' is right action.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1]. <https://thewolfereviewblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/09/the-hindu-view-of-life-by-sarvepalli-radhakrishnan/>
- [2]. Schilpp, Paul Arthur, ed. (1992) [1952, Tudor]. The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Motilal Banarsidass. ISBN 81-208-0792-8.
- [3]. Murty, K. Satchidananda; Ashok Vohra (1990). Radhakrishnan: his life and ideas. SUNY Press. ISBN 0-7914-0343-2.
- [4]. Parthasarathi, G.; Chattopadhyaya, Debi Prasad, ed. (1989). Radhakrishnan: centenary volume. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.