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## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, AUROBINDO AND DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

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**Abstract:-** Swami Vivekananda stressed on giving the public only positive education, because negative thoughts weaken men. Swami Vivekananda told, if young boys and girls are encouraged and are not unnecessarily criticized all the time, they are bound to improve in time. In New York, Vivekananda used to observe the Irish colonists come – downtrodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and wooden-headed – with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. Vivekananda observed a completely different spectacle in next six months- the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is more fright. Sri Aurobindo's (1956) concept of 'education' is not only acquiring information, but "the acquiring of various kinds of information", he points out, "is only one and not the chief of the means and necessities of education: its central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and spirit". "If we take any philosopher as a guru, if we treat his works as gospel, if we make of his teaching a religion complete with dogma and exegesis, we may become members of his congregation of the faithful, but will not possess the openness of mind essential for a critical understanding of the master's views. The true teachers help us to think for ourselves in the new situations which arise.

**Keywords:** Downtrodden, Human mind.

### INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda believed education is the manifestation of perfection already in men. He did not think it a pity that the existing system of education did not enable a person to stand on his own feet, nor did it teach him self-confidence and self-respect. To Vivekananda, education was not only collection of information, but something more meaningful; he felt education should be man-making, life giving and character-building. To him education was an assimilation of noble ideas.

"Education is not the amount of information that we put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life building, man making, character making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library..."

Swami Vivekananda stressed on giving the public only positive education, because negative thoughts weaken men. Swami Vivekananda told, if young boys and girls are encouraged and are not unnecessarily criticized all the time, they are bound to improve in time. In New York, Vivekananda used to observe the Irish colonists come – downtrodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and wooden-headed – with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. Vivekananda observed a completely different spectacle in next six months- the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is more fright. Swami Vivekananda tried to find out the cause, he told, if this incidence is seen by the explanations of Vedanta, that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country – the whole of Nature was telling him with one voice – "Pat, you have no more hope, you were born a slave and will remain so". Having been thus told from his birth, Pat started believing in it and hypnotized himself that he is very low. While no sooner had he landed on America than the shout went up on all sides – "Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done

all, a man like you and me can do everything; have courage!" Pat raised his head and saw that it was so; the self-confidence within him woke up again. Swami Vivekananda feels likewise, the education that young boys and girls receive is very negative. He thinks they do not gain confidence or self-respect from this education, so according to Swami Vivekananda only positive education should be given to children. Swami Vivekananda realized three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great:

- Conviction of the powers of goodness.
- Absence of jealousy and suspicion.
- Helping all who are trying to be and do well.

Swami Vivekananda suggested trying to give up jealousy and conceit and learn to work united for others. He told, purity, patience and perseverance overcome all obstacles. He suggested taking courage and work on. Patience and steady work, according to Swami Vivekananda, this is the only way to get success. According to Swami Vivekananda "faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, and faith in God- this is the secret of greatness. Swami Vivekananda observed the history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves, and he it is faith which calls out divinity within. So he told, if people have faith in three hundred and thirty millions of Hindu mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and still have no faith in themselves, there will be no salvation. Vivekananda points out that the defect of the present-day education is that it has no definite goal to pursue. A sculptor has a clear idea about what he wants to shape out of the marble block; similarly, a painter knows what he is going to paint. But a teacher, he says, has no clear idea about the goal of his teaching. Swamiji attempts to establish, through his words and deeds, that the end of all education is man making. He prepares the scheme of this man-making education in the light of his over-all philosophy of Vedanta. According to Vedanta, the essence of man lies in his soul, which he possesses in addition to his body and mind. In true with this philosophy, Swamiji defines education as 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' The aim of education is to manifest in our lives the perfection, which is the very nature of our inner self. This perfection is the realization of the infinite power which resides in everything and every-where-existence, consciousness and bliss (satchidananda). After understanding the essential nature of this perfection, we should identify it with our inner self. For achieving this, one will have to eliminate one's ego, ignorance and all other false identification, which stand in the way. Meditation, fortified by moral purity and passion for truth, helps man to leave behind the body, the senses, the ego and all other non-self elements, which are perishable. He thus realizes his immortal divine self, which is of the nature of infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. At this stage, man becomes aware of his self as identical with all other selves of the universe, i.e. different selves as manifestations of the same self. Hence education, in Vivekananda's sense, enables one to comprehend one's self within as the self everywhere. The essential unity of the entire universe is realized through education. Accordingly, man making for Swamiji stands for rousing mans to the awareness of his true self. However, education thus signified does not point towards the development of the soul in isolation from body and mind. We have to remember that basis of Swamiji's philosophy is Advaita which preaches unity in diversity. Therefor, man making for him means a harmonious development of the body, mind and soul. In his scheme of education, Swamiji lays great stress on physical health because a sound mind resides in a sound body. He often quotes the Upanishadic dictum 'nayamatma balahinena labhyah'; i.e. the self cannot be realized by the physically weak. However, along with physical culture, he harps on the need of paying special attention to the culture of the mind. According to Swamiji, the mind of the students has to be controlled and trained through meditation, concentration and practice of ethical purity. All success in any line of work, he emphasizes, is the result of the power of concentration. By way of illustration, he mentions that the chemist in the laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind and brings them into one focus-the elements to be analyzed-and finds out their secrets. Concentration, which necessarily implies detachment from other things, constitutes a part of Brahmacharya, which is one of the guiding mottos of his scheme of education. Brahmacharya, in a nutshell, stands for the practice of self-control for securing harmony of the impulses. By his philosophy of education, Swamiji thus brings it home that education is not a mere accumulation of information but a comprehensive training for life. To quote him: 'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there undigested, all your life.' Education for him means that process by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, and intellect is sharpened, as a result of which one can stand on one's own feet. Swami Vivekananda is an exemplary philosopher of India who made Indian religion popular all around the world. His philosophy has contributed much to the development of educational philosophy in India. The educational philosophy of Swami



Vivekananda has been explained in this book with the headings philosophy of Life, Education, Aims of Education, Methods of Teaching and Learning, Teacher, Curriculum, Discipline and Values along with his brief biography. Swami Vivekananda was one of the first among religious teachers to understand the importance of science and technology. In the first place, Swamiji saw that poor countries like India would be able to overcome poverty and backwardness only by mastering technology. Secondly, Swamiji saw that science is not contradictory to the eternal spiritual principles, which is the foundation of Indian culture. Both Science and eternal religion are concerned with truth. Science seeks truth in the physical world, whereas religion seeks truth in the spiritual realm. Thus, religion and science are complementary. The other primary purpose of education is to build character and to enable people to lead moral lives. However, this is precisely the field where most of the modern systems of education have failed. Swami Vivekananda has given a new definition of morality. To quote his words, "The only definition that can be given of morality is this: that which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral". For Swamiji unselfishness and service are not mere matters of rules and regulations but of reality. If God dwells in all beings as the Supreme Self, if every man is potentially divine, then to serve God in man or man as God is the best form of worship. To quote Swamiji's own words: "It is a privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of God. God is here in all these human souls. He is the soul of man." (C.W.I. 424) According to Swami Vivekananda, the basic purpose of education is the total development of human personality. Everyone is endowed with certain capacities, which remain dormant, although in a potential form, in childhood. Swami Vivekananda believed education is the process by which these inherent potentialities in human personality manifest themselves in completing his or her total development. To Vivekananda education was a man-making process which would mean arousing the people to an awareness of their own worth, dignity and responsibility, making them the source of all the strength and sustenance of society, creating a society which will provide a healthy milieu for the development of character and personality of all its children. Educational philosophy of Vivekananda and the aims of education together with the concept of education are founded on Vedanta philosophy, particularly the Advaita philosophy which says that in the lowest worm as well as in the highest human being the same divine nature is present. "The whole object of Vedanta philosophy is, by constant struggle, to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God". The belief of this philosophy is that every human being is spirit (Atma), the soul which is immortal, evolving up or reverting back from birth to birth and death to death. Swami Vivekananda only reinterpreted the basics of Vaidik philosophy in the context of 20th century man and the society. Vivekananda had great faith in education to him; this was the basic means for achieving human excellence and solving national problems. He said there are no problems which cannot be solved by that magic word "education". He defined education as the "development of faculty, not an accumulation of words". To him education was meant for the training of individuals "to will rightly and efficiently". He further said that the education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for existence, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion, is not worth the name. Real education, to him, means that which enables one to stand on his own leg. Vivekananda stressed the need to educate the millions of our common people to revitalize Indian culture of the day. A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. National development rests upon the goodness and greatness of men; and goodness and greatness of men are determined largely by education. Education for "total human development" was the vision of Vivekananda which, he believed, could be achieved by refining and processing of in eternal human energies through the science of man in depth (Adhyatma Vidya). Philosophy, the science, the art and studies of various other fields of knowledge could help nations in achieving this goal. Through education nations have to unfold the humanistic and divine possibilities lying hidden within their people and raise the levels from which their consciousness handles their external, natural and social environment. True education is that which does this. Vivekananda was deeply spiritual and intensely human. His message is the message of humanism. But his humanism has a deeper content. He said that education which gives us intellectual energy must also give us humanistic impulse and its energy of character. If man's education combines these two energy sources he will become tremendously powerful, well educated, and full of hope, endowed with a firm mind and will, and strength of muscle and nerve. Vivekananda said "We want our education to turn out millions-of such young people enjoying that unit of human bliss." Although Swami Vivekananda was an idealist and a spiritualist emphasizing realization of divinity in man, yet he was fully aware of the need for national development to be achieved through education. He stressed education for democracy and said that strengthening of democracy was possible only through education. The strength of a democracy was seen to lie in its alert and patriotic citizens who could be produced and developed through education. All institutional education, socio-political education in a democracy, he held, should therefore be designed to produce citizens who are free, responsible, and politically aware, who feel to belong to the country in which they live, who are sensitive to what happens around them. Education should produce such enlightened democratic citizens. Thus, Vivekananda, emphasized education for democracy and citizenship. He, however, was in favor of creating an ethical basis of democratic politics through education. He stressed the need for developing democratic tolerance in the people and a sense of being truly free which could be fulfilled by properly organized and rightly conducted education. Thus, Vivekananda's educational philosophy had two major components of aims-one the individual aims and second the social aims. Under individual aims of education he emphasized total human development including physical, mental, social, cultural and spiritual development of the child. He did not leave out even the vocational



development aim. In a way he stood as the embodiment of man- making education. Under the social aims of education he stressed education for citizenship and democracy, education for national integration, education for the poor and education for women, education for strengthening the whole society. In a way he stood for nation- building education. But, these two aspects were not considered by him as separate and independent. He brought a fine synthesis between the individual and the social aims of education when he said "they alone live who live for others; the rest are more dead than alive."

## AUROBINDO'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Philosopher Aurobindo (1872-1950) can be viewed as a 20th century renaissance person. Born in Kolkata, India, Aurobindo was educated at Cambridge University. He was an intellectual who intensely analyzed human and social evolution. Aurobindo Ghosh was an Idealistic to the core. His Idealistic philosophy of life was based upon Vedantic philosophy of Upanishad. He maintains that the kind of education, we need in our country, is an education "proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture that we are in quest of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past, but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming-self creation, to her eternal spirit."

Sri Aurobindo's (1956) concept of 'education' is not only acquiring information, but "the acquiring of various kinds of information", he points out, "is only one and not the chief of the means and necessities of education: its central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and spirit".

In "A National System of Education", Sri Aurobindo points out that the question is not between modernism and antiquity, but between an imported civilisation and the greater possibilities of the Indian mind and nature, not between the present and the past, but between the present and the future. He pointed out that "the living spirit of the demand for national education no more requires a return to the astronomy and mathematics of Bhaskara or the forms of the system of Nalanda than the living spirit of Swadhesi, a return from railway and motor traction to the ancient chariot and the bullock-cart."<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, spoke not of a return to the 5th century but an initiation of the centuries to come, not a reversion but a break forward away from a present artificial falsity to India's own greater innate potentialities, which are demanded by the soul of India. The major question, he pointed out, is not merely what science we learn, but what we shall do with our science and how too, acquiring the scientific mind and recovering the habit of scientific discovery, we shall relate it to other powers of the human mind and scientific knowledge to other knowledge more intimate to other and not less light-giving and power-giving parts of our intelligence and nature. Again, he pointed out the question is not what language, Sanskrit or another, should be acquired by whatever method is most natural, efficient and stimulating to the mind, but the vital question is how we are to learn and make use of Sanskrit and the indigenous languages so as to get the heart and intimate sense of our own culture and establish a vivid continuity between the still living power of our past and the yet uncreated power of our future, and how we are to learn and use English or any other foreign tongue so as to know helpfully the life, ideas and culture of other countries and establish our right relations with the world around us. He argued that the aim and principle of a true national education is not to ignore modern truth and knowledge, but to take our foundation on India's own being, own mind, and own spirit.



As against the idea that the modern European civilization is a thing that we have to acquire and fit ourselves for, and so only can we live and prosper, and it is this that our education must do for us, he argued that the idea of national education challenges the sufficiency of that assumption. He pointed out that India would do better, taking over whatever new knowledge or just ideas Europe has to offer, to assimilate them to its own knowledge and culture, its own native temperament and spirit, mind and social genius and create there-from the civilisation of the future.

According to Sri Aurobindo, there is within the universal mind and soul of humanity the mind and soul of the individual with its infinite variation, its commonness and its uniqueness and between them there stands an intermediate power, the mind of a nation, the soul of the people. In his concept of a national system of education, Sri Aurobindo aimed at taking account of all these three elements so that national education would not be a machine-made fabric, but a true building or a living evocation of the powers of the mind and spirit of the human being. Aurobindo prescribed free environment for the child to develop all his latent faculties to the maximum and suggested all those subjects and activities should possess elements of creativity and educational expression. He wished to infuse a new life and spirit into each subject and activity through which the development of super human being could become possible. He laid down the following principle for curriculum-

- Curriculum should be in such a way which child find as interesting.
  - It should include those entire subjects which promote mental and spiritual development.
  - It should motivate children towards the attainment of knowledge of the whole world.
  - It should contain creativity of life and constructive capacities
- Aurobindo describes curriculum for different stages of education-
- Mother tongue, English, French, literature, national history, art, painting, general science, social studies and arithmetic should be taught at primary stage.
  - Mother tongue, English, French, literature, arithmetic, art, chemistry, physics, botany, physiology, health education, social studies at secondary stage.
  - Indian and western philosophy, history of civilization, English literature, French, sociology, psychology, history, chemistry, physics, botany at university level.
  - Art, painting, photography, sculptural, drawing, type, cottage-industries, mechanical and electrical engineering, nursing etc at vocational level

Aurobindo enunciates certain sound principles of good teaching, which have to be kept in mind when actually engaged in the process of learning. According to Sri Aurobindo, the first principle of true teaching is “that nothing can be taught.” He explains that the knowledge is already dormant within the child and for this reason. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master; “he is a helper and a guide.” The role of the teacher “is to suggest and not to impose”. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect the instruments of knowledge and helps him and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him; he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface.

## School

Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy of education aims at modifying the school curricula, maximizing the learning modalities, helping the child to achieve his potentiality at his own pace and level and devote his time to discover himself. This kind of schooling is seen as an anti-thesis of an imposed uniformity of prescribed courses and teaching which the traditional schools purport to do and can be linked to what was taught in schools under the colonial rule. The type of schooling visualised by Sri Aurobindo is seen as aiming to bridge the gap between the child’s life at school and that at home.

In contrast to the educational ideas of Sri Aurobindo, the present day education system in India is purely an instruction-of-information enterprise, supported by a subject-time-bound curriculum, which neither relates to the needs or abilities of the learner nor takes into consideration the way children learn successfully. Instead of being child-oriented it is subject-oriented. The schools focus on competition with others, mastery of subject matter for getting better marks or grades than on learning in cooperation with and from one another for personal growth and for welfare of others.

This is not exclusive to Indian phenomenon, rather all over the world education is largely reductionist, materialist, ego enforcing, and devoid of the joys of the spirit. It is in this context that there is a need to examine initiatives which are rooted in Indian tradition, seek alternatives in curriculum teaching and learning for measuring success, involve children in the process of learning and focus on learning from the another and not from an authoritative pedagogue.

Children should be provided with a free environment so that they are able to gain more and more knowledge by their own efforts. According to him any retrained and imposed environment stunt the growth and natural development. Aurobindo propagated the concept of self discipline which was the cure of impressionistic discipline.

The 20th century saw the birth of a new social phenomenon termed as ‘globalization’. The idea is that the world is evolving into an interconnected social system producing a corresponding higher level of collective consciousness on a planetary scale. Therefore, humankind now has a communal responsibility to facilitate evolutionary movement toward global social integration, the construction of a new social reality and to cultivate planetary collective consciousness. Due to the severity of present day international problems, the grand idea of globalization now holds minimal concern for the majority of educators.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh strived to philosophically reconcile Western scientific rationalism with Eastern transcendent metaphysics into a holistic narrative of reality. His academic interest was interdisciplinary in scope: political science, education, sociology, psychology and philosophy. He was deeply influenced by Western thought, most significantly, Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theory and French intellectual Henri Bergson’s philosophy of cognitive evolution. The ideas of impending human evolution and global futurism became the foundation of his spiritual philosophy, sociological theories, political ideology and educational thought.

His approach to yoga is an integration of the physical social behavior with the metaphysical level as a holistic system of inner-self meditation and outer-social action: (1) knowing (seeking objective rational knowledge), (2) behavior (cultivating subjective positive social and humanistic mental models), and contemplation (nourishing

reflective capitulation to the evolutionary energy of the absolute). His method of Integral Yoga is not a specific physical or psychological procedure of physical postures but it is to consciously surrender to evolutionary energy. This energy causes increasing levels of personal evolution, spiritual awareness, which is necessary for future social evolution.

In 1947, after the emancipation of India, Sri Aurobindo devoted himself entirely, along with his soul mate and social comrade, Mirra Alfassa ("the Mother"), to liberate the whole of humanity socially and spiritually by advancing Integral Yoga and planetary social activism toward human unity and global evolution.

Sri Aurobindo's vision of evolution as a long slow process of dialectical energy of evolution being the intercourse between spiritual descent into the world and evolutionary ascent of consciousness. Aurobindo's idea is that evolution is the incarnation of the Divine on earth through descent into the earth nature and thus into the collective embodiment of humankind. Within this framework, Sri Aurobindo asserts that planetary evolution has resulted in distinctive spheres of existence.

Considering that India has seen always in the human being a soul, a portion of the divinity enwrapped in the mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit, he concluded that the one central object of the national system of education should be the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities as also the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and the normative needs of its ascending movements. Not limited to these two, Sri Aurobindo put forth in its aim also the raising of both the individual soul and the national soul into the powers of the life and the ascending mind and the soul of humanity. He added "at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being."<sup>2</sup>

Indian thinkers have dwelt on the philosophy of education and all related aspects like knowledge, intelligence, mind and the functions of teaching and learning to which there are ample references in the texts and to the illustrious teachers of yore like Sri Krishna, Vidura, Bhishma, Dronacharya in the Mahabharata and Vashista in the Ramayana. At a much later stage, one encounter teachers like Susruta, teaching Ayurveda to his students, drawing out the characteristics of an ideal teacher and an ideal student. Buddha and Mahavira have been great teachers. It may even be worthwhile to cull out the principles of teaching and learning embodied in their teachings from the available textual evidences. The quality of Indian discourse on Teaching and Learning has been widely acknowledged. There are many more examples during the medieval times of effective teachers, both of the religious and vocational kinds, which may be taken as the main foundations of educational thoughts of the present times.

In the modern India too there have been many original thinkers on education, who have felt the need for a review of the educational system introduced by the British Raj, creating loyal servants of the government. There was a search for a better system of education in the country among the reformers and intellectuals. In this process, a good deal of thinking, combined with actual experimentation on various alternative models of education had taken place. Unfortunately, their contributions have not been adequately reflected in the educational decisions during recent times. Among others, we can remember the contribution of Vivekananda, Tagore, Aurobindo, Tilak, Zakir Husain, Radhakrishnan and above all, Mahatma Gandhi. It is high time to review the principles of education expounded by them and to examine their validity in the present context.

In order to sensitise the teacher educators of the country to the indigenous thinkers and to develop short and meaningful reading material covering each of the indigenous thinkers of education, the NCTE decided to publish monographs and to organise interactions through seminars of teacher educators from all over the country. The monographs are meant to be self-educational material. They can also be useful for initiating discourses among the pupil teachers on various aspects of education covering each of the indigenous thinkers. The first publication Gandhi on Education was received very well by the teachers and teacher educators. It was followed by another entitled 'Zakir Husain on Education'. The present monograph covering the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo has been written by Prof. Manoj Das an eminent scholar and author of international repute.

Sri Aurobindo emphasized that education should be in accordance with the needs of our real modern life. In other words, education should create dynamic citizen so that they are able to meet the needs of modern complex life. According to him, physical development and holiness are the chief aims of education. As such, he not only emphasized mere physical development, but physical purity also without which no spiritual development is possible. In this sense physical development and purification are the two bases on which the spiritual development is built. The second important aim of education is to train all the senses hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling and tasting. According to him these senses can be fully trained when nerve, chitta and manas are pure. Hence, through education purity of senses is to be achieved before any development is possible. The third aim of education is to achieve mental development of the child. This mental development means the enhancement of all mental faculties' namely-memory, thinking, reasoning, imagination, and discrimination etc. education should develop them fully and harmoniously. Another important aim of education is the development of morality. Shri Aurobindo has emphasized that without moral and emotional development only, mental development becomes harmful to human process. Heart of a child should be so developed as to show extreme love, sympathy and consideration for all living beings. This is real moral development. Thus, the teacher should be a role model to his children that mere imitation can enable them to reach higher and higher stages of development. Development of conscience is another important aim of education that needs to develop by the help of teacher. Conscience has four level chitta, manas, intelligence, and knowledge.



Aurobindo emphasized that the main aim of education is to promote spiritual development. According to him every human being has some fragment of divine existence within himself and education can scan it from each individual with its full extent.

### Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's Educational Philosophy

“The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatizes, and inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself.” Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Exceedingly popular among his students right from his early days as a professor at Presidency College, Madras (since April, 1909) Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an evocative teacher. He was offered the professorship in Calcutta University when he was less than 30 years old. He served as Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936. In 1939, he was appointed the Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. Two years later, he took over the Sir Sayaji Rao Chair of Indian Culture and Civilisation in Banaras. “If we take any philosopher as a guru, if we treat his works as gospel, if we make of his teaching a religion complete with dogma and exegesis, we may become members of his congregation of the faithful, but will not possess the openness of mind essential for a critical understanding of the master’s views. The true teachers help us to think for ourselves in the new situations which arise. A teacher of outstanding reputation he has served the nation in different capacities and become the Vice-president and then President of India. His educational thoughts bear immense values in modern times. Being the Chairman of University Education Commission he had recommended many changes in the higher education after Independence for reconstruction of nation. His educational thoughts has implications in the educational structure and curriculum at different stages of education. Radhakrishnan located his metaphysics within the Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta tradition (sampradaya). And like other Vedantins before him, Radhakrishnan wrote commentaries on the Prasthanatraya (that is, main primary texts of Vedanta): the Upanisads (1953), Brahma Sutra (1959), and the Bhagavadgita (1948).

As an Advaitin, Radhakrishnan embraced a metaphysical idealism. But Radhakrishnan’s idealism was such that it recognized the reality and diversity of the world of experience (prakṛti) while at the same time preserving the notion of a wholly transcendent Absolute (Brahman), an Absolute that is identical to the self (Atman). While the world of experience and of everyday things is certainly not ultimate reality as it is subject to change and is characterized by finitude and multiplicity, it nonetheless has its origin and support in the Absolute (Brahman) which is free from all limits, diversity, and distinctions (nirguṇa). Brahman is the source of the world and its manifestations, but these modes do not affect the integrity of Brahman. Radhakrishnan associates a vast constellation of terms with intuition. At its best, intuition is an “integral experience”. Radhakrishnan uses the term “integral” in at least three ways. First, intuition is integral in the sense that it coordinates and synthesizes all other experiences. It integrates all other experiences into a more unified whole. Second, intuition is integral as it forms the basis of all other experiences. In other words, Radhakrishnan holds that all experiences are at bottom intuitional. Third, intuition is integral in the sense that the results of the experience are integrated into the life of the individual. For Radhakrishnan, intuition finds expression in the world of action and social relations.

At times Radhakrishnan prefers to emphasize the “mystical” and “spiritual” quality of intuition as attested to by the expressions “religious experience” (IVL 91), “religious consciousness” (IVL 199), “mystical experience” (IVL 88), “spiritual idealism” (IVL 87), “self-existent spiritual experience” (IVL 99), “prophetic indications” and “the real ground in man’s deepest being” (IVL 103), “spiritual apprehension” (IVL 103), “moments of vision” (IVL 94), “revelation” (IVL 210), “supreme light” (IVL 206), and even “faith” (IVL 199). But it is the creative potency of intuition, designated by Radhakrishnan’s reference to the “creative center” of the individual (IVL 113), “creative intuition” (IVL 205), “creative spirit” (IVL 206), and “creative energy” (IVL 205), that is the lynchpin for Radhakrishnan’s understanding of intuition. As Radhakrishnan understands it, all progress is the result of the creative potency of intuition.



For Radhakrishnan, intuition is a distinct form of experience. Intuition is of a self-certifying character (svatassiddha). It is sufficient and complete. It is self-established (svatasiddha), self-evidencing (sv sa? vedya), and self-luminous (aṣvayam-prakas) (IVL 92). Intuition entails pure comprehension, entire significance, complete validity (IVL 93). It is both truth-filled and truth-bearing (IVL 93). Intuition is its own cause and its own explanation (IVL 92). It is sovereign (IVL 92). Intuition is a positive feeling of calm and confidence, joy and strength (IVL 93). Intuition is profoundly satisfying (IVL 93). It is peace, power and joy (IVL 93). Intuition is the ultimate form of experience for Radhakrishnan. It is ultimate in the sense that intuition constitutes the fullest and therefore the most authentic realization of the Real (Brahman). The ultimacy of intuition is also accounted for by Radhakrishnan in that it is the ground of all other forms of experience. Intuition is a self-revelation of the divine. Intuitive experience is immediate. Immediacy does not imply in Radhakrishnan’s mind an “absence of psychological mediation, but only

non-mediation by conscious thought" (IVL 98). Intuition operates on a supra-conscious level, unmediated as it is by conscious thought. Even so, Radhakrishnan holds that there is "no such thing as pure experience, raw and undigested. It is always mixed up with layers of interpretation" (IVL 99). One might object here that Radhakrishnan has conflated the experience itself with its subsequent interpretation and expression. However, Radhakrishnan's comment is an attempt to deny the Hegelian interpretation of Hinduism's "contentless" experience, affirming instead that intuition is the plenitude of experience.

Finally, intuition, according to Radhakrishnan, is ineffable. It escapes the limits of language and logic, and there is "no conception by which we can define it" (IVL 96). In such experiences "[t]hought and reality coalesce and a creative merging of subject and object results" (IVL 92). While the experience itself transcends expression, it also provokes it (IVL 95). The provocation of expression is, for Radhakrishnan, testimony to the creative impulse of intuition. All creativity and indeed all progress in the various spheres of life is the inevitable result of intuition. Radhakrishnan stated that Western philosophers, despite all claims to objectivity, were influenced by theological influences of their own culture. He wrote books on Indian philosophy according to Western academic standards, and made all efforts for the West to give serious consideration to Indian philosophy. In his book *An Idealist View of Life*, he made a powerful case for the importance of intuitive thinking as opposed to purely intellectual forms of thought. He is well known for his commentaries on the Prasthanas Trayi namely, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra.

Dr. Radhakrishnan held key positions in the educational scenario. He started his career as a teacher. He was known to be a kind and warm teacher. He was selected as the Vice Chancellor of the Andhra University and later as the Vice Chancellor of the great Banarus Hindu University. He held a prestigious post in the Oxford University for more than a decade as the Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics. He was awarded the highest honor in India – The Bharat Ratna, for his meritorious role in the field of Education. Being a great teacher his birthday on 5th September is remembered as Teacher's Day in his honor. He simplified the intense Hindu philosophy and made the Western world realize the rational views of Indian philosophy and how one could use it in life. This made the West sit up and accept Indian philosophy and won India the much needed respect and admiration. Even in his political career he brought in his philosophical views and brought India to the forefront when she was reeling under the British suppression. Though he was an intellectual scholar Dr. Radhakrishnan was the most popular teacher right from the time he taught at Presidency College Madras till he became a Professor at Oxford. He was warm hearted and reached out to his students with his kindness. He professed that learning was a "life-long" affair and spread his passion for education. He declared that "Hell does not exist as there is no place, where God is not present and hence a hell with all evil and no Godliness could never exist. In India several religions thrived and Dr. Radhakrishnan said that it was possible only because we practiced a lot of tolerance. He spread the messages of the Upanishads that took the individual above the materialistic world and made them see beyond this world. His broad minded views made him a popular statesman and a much loved teacher. He strongly convinced the world in general and the west in particular that Hinduism was not just a religion but a "way of life". He was loved greatly by his close associates, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who hailed him as best teacher.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is the finest product of the contemporary Indian renaissance, which is the result of the impact of the West on Eastern ideals. He stands for all that is universal and of permanent value in Hindu thought. He has assimilated the best of the West. His fascination for the West has not stultified his freedom of thought. He combines in himself the roles of a philosopher, a prophet striving towards the unification of all faiths, an eminent educationist and a statesman. He is one of the finest speakers of our age. As a philosopher, he has to his credit the most splendid account of Indian philosophy in two volumes. The massive erudition the brilliant style, the cogent array of quotations, the authentic documentation, the interesting and instructive comparisons with Western thought have made the book a permanent classic and it will continue for long to be the standard work on the subject. His first book, "The Ethics of the Vedanta and Its Material Presupposition", being his thesis for the M.A. degree examination of the Madras University, published in 1908, at once established his fame as a great philosopher of undoubted ability. All his later works are landmarks in their respective fields. Expressing abstract and abstruse philosophical thoughts in intelligible language is considered very difficult. But Dr. Radhakrishnan was one of the few who could accomplish this with ease and simplicity. To him, philosophy was a way of understanding life and his study of Indian philosophy served as a cultural therapy. By interpreting Indian thought in western terms and showing that it was imbued with reason and logic he was able to give Indians a new sense of esteem, who were overcome by inferiority complex by imperial forces. But he also made clear to them that their long and rich tradition had been arrested and required further evolution and he exhorted Indians to cast off much that was corrupt and abhorrent. Radhakrishnan's genius has shown itself in his rare ability as an interpreter of philosophy and as a constructive metaphysician. As an interpreter he is second to none. He is the hero of a thousand platforms and can speak on the most intricate and difficult subjects without reference to notes. His phenomenal memory is only equaled by his eloquence and it is illumined by his profound scholarship and ample topical reference. His style of speaking without notes is not confined to ceremonial functions, but extends to academic performances also. His six Hibbert lectures on 'An Idealist View of Life' delivered in London in 1930, and his 'Kamala Lectures' in Calcutta in 1942, made a deep impression on the audience. It is on

record, that when Radhakrishnan delivered the British Academy lecture on Gautama the Buddha, the president, while thanking him, said that the lecture, on the mastermind Buddha, was not only on a Mastermind but was also by a Mastermind.

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