

**Critical Analysis Of 'The Hindu View Of Life' By Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
Hinduism: Absorber Of All The Religions And Cultures**

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ABSTRACT

In the decades of 1930s and 1940s into Anglican literature was marked by the pioneering efforts made by Dr. Radhakrishnan in the field of Hindu philosophy. His works like 'Kalki' or 'The Future of Civilization' issued a Gandhian warning about increasing industrialization in the modern world. While his works like 'The Hindu View of Life' (1926) and An idealist view of Life (1932) are the lectures delivered by Dr. Radhakrishnan at Manchester College. In his lecture 'The Hindu View of Life' he defined Hinduism and declared that it is not a sectarian creed but a broad spectrum view of life. The westerners were puzzled about Hinduism so, he explained the inherent characteristics in Hinduism to the westerners. He explained that India is not a country of blind beliefs, superstitions and illiterate people but has innate vitality.

Keywords: Hinduism, Caste, Culture, Creed, Diversity, Isht Devta, Tolerance.

Aldous Huxley had remarked about Radhakrishnan that he "**is the master of words and no words**". It refers to his ability to express the most abstruse thoughts of philosophy in such a fine language that it becomes comprehensible to all. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born on September 5, 1888 at Tiruttani, Madras in South India. He was born in a poor Brahmin family. His father Sarvepalli Veeraswami was a poor man and was employed on a small income. It was very difficult for him to educate his son and to bring up his large family. But Radhakrishnan was a meritorious student so his father sent him to a local school finally. He graduated with his master's degree in Arts from Madras University. He was the first vice president and second president of India. He was an unsurpassable twentieth century scholar of contemporary religion and philosophy. He defended Hindu culture against the western criticism and described Indian traditions as the pride and dignity of Indian inhabitants. His work 'The Hindu View of Life' is based on the lectures delivered by him at Manchester College, Oxford. He expressed his

gratitude to authorities for the opportunity to deliver his lectures in college as well as to find an opportunity to define and defend Hinduism in western culture. The Hindu View of Life throws a flood of light on the concept of Hinduism. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan Hinduism has absorbed essence of all religion into itself and develop the new concepts of 'Ishtdevta' and 'Sawdharma' which are the basis of tolerance, universal love and love for all creations. Hinduism is considered world's oldest religion it does not belong to any particular creed or set of beliefs. The book contains four parts:

- I. Religious Experience: Its Nature and Content
- II. Conflict of Religion: The Hindu Attitude
- III. Hindu Dharma I
- IV. Hindu Dharma II

He defined Hinduism in the very first chapter of his work 'The Hindu View of Life'. The first chapter 'Religious Experience its Nature and Concept' tells about the essential characteristics of Hinduism. He described the term Hindu in geographical context. He did not describe it as a religious term. He said that the term 'Hindu' is a geographical term and is derived from the Sanskrit word Sindhu. Sindhu is the local name for Indus River in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. By the end of 12th and 13th century India was popularly known as Hindustan.

Hinduism is not a uniform creed or set of beliefs. It is a collection (Museum) of beliefs, rites and rituals or a geographical map. Its content has altered from age to age, from community to community. Its different meaning for everyone such as it means one thing to Brahmnical but other to vaishavite or sakta or Buddhist. Hinduism is an absorbent of different expressions, customs and ideas. It has supplied religions foundations to about half the world. China, Japan, Tibet, Burma and Cylon look to India as their spiritual home.

Hinduism is not a definitive dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the godward endeavour of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages. People from different cultures and races have found existence in this country yet Hinduism has been proved supreme over all these creeds and cultures. Yet Indians are different rites and rituals.

As a matter of fact Hinduism is not just a set of creed or a pattern of practices but a way of life which recognizes diversity and believes in the unity in diversity. Hinduism has no set limits as a religion. It is a felt inner experience of entire personality. Religious experience is of a self

certifying character. Hinduism carries its own introduction and no more explanation is needed to define two contents of Hinduism. Yet the religious seers try to justify the innermost convictions in a way that satisfies the thought of the age. Hence, a religion rests of faith. But what is faith?

He says that mechanical faith is different from the religious faith. He called blind an unfortunate legacy. He tells us about the existence of God also. Description of God may vary from person to person, some time these descriptions may even contradict. One may define god as primitive despot, a sort of sultan in the sky but Hindus have never doubted the supremacy of one universal spirit Hinduism says that "God hid himself". Devine reality can never be defined fully so the seer of Upanishad exclaimed that 'absolute a silence' (santo yum atma). Devine mystery is mystery about which nothing can be said but human beings are social animals and want an interpretation of Devine reality so to define the God (Devine mystery) imagination is used by all the saints of religion. God is then called perfect personality (Uttampurusha) and we are the persons (Purushas).

John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, has summed up the mystic position and ... says, "**Such as men themselves are, such will God Himself seem to them to be.**

"God is more than the law that command, the Judge that condemns, the love that constrain"

In the second lecture 'Conflict of Religion: The Hindu Attitude', He explains that every individual or group of individuals is free to enjoy freedom and preserve their individuality. Hinduism is the first example of missionary religion in the world. Different concepts from all over the world have been synthesized into a perennial philosophy so it is called a missionary religion. It does not believe in the mission to convert humanity to one opinion (religion). It believes that karma (conduct) is the primary matter not the belief. Hinduism took people from different cultures and followers and worshippers of different Gods into its Hindu fold. The early Aryans worshipped the forces of nature. Hence, they gave way to image worshipping tradition. For example, Krishna is the highest Godhead in the Bhagavad-Gita. In early Sanskrit literature, goddess Kali in her various shapes is considered the prime God figure. Worshipping is an individual act which includes making offerings (fruits, flowers, money and other things) to their deities. They chant mantras, repeat the name of their gods and goddesses to please them. Hinduism provides freedom to choose any form of belief and worship, as it respects every religion. It never condemns other religions. So it is averted that Hinduism absorbs everything that enters into it and transforms it into a higher level. It believes in one God who is worshipped

by different names in different cultures and sects such as Buddhists worship Lord Budhha, Vedanta's worship Brahma, Vaishnavism worship God Vishnu and so on.

The third Lecture 'Hindu Dharma I' is a discussion of the two aspects of Hinduism, the philosophical and the practical. He talks about the practical and philosophical side of Hindu dharma in this chapter. When he interprets the practical side of Hinduism he says that it is not only form of thought but it is a way of life. All the atheist, theist, skeptic and agonists may be Hindu if they are ready to accept the Hindu culture. Hinduism does not insist on religious conformity but on moral life. Four scales are considered to regulate human life according to Hinduism these are Dharma, Artha Kama and Moksha.

He then talks about the caste system in India in the fourth chapter 'Hindu Dharma II'. He defines type of caste on the basis of their origin. According to this classification castes may be tribal, racial, and occupational or may be originate as an outcome of migration. He explains the four castes defined by Manu. These are Brahman, Vaish, Kshtriya and Shudra. Caste system in India came into existence for the development of society. He defined Brahman as the man of thoughts, Kshtriya as the man of action, Vaish as the man of feelings and Shudras were assigned the duty to perform all type of odd works.

CONCLUSION

Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan explains Hinduism before westerners because they were not able to understand the real essence of Hindu Dharma and has misunderstood the term 'Hinduism'. He says that, ***"we must work for a world in which all races can blend and mingle, each retaining its special characteristics and developing whatever is best in it"***

It was an attempt of Dr. Radhakrishnan to make the world realize about the exact position and background of Indian culture and civilization.

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