

CHAPTER-VI**DR. RADHAKRISHNAN'S THOUGHTS REGARDING
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VI.1 INTRODUCTION :

In the previous chapter i.e. Chapter No.V - "Dr. Radhakrishnan and University Education", Dr. Radhakrishnan's thoughts on University education are discussed. In this chapter, his thoughts regarding religious and moral education are discussed. His thoughts regarding religious and moral education are found in his various books and in his number of speeches delivered at various places on various occasions. Similarly his thoughts regarding religious and moral education are found in the report of University Education Commission (1948-49). His thoughts collected from the above sources are discussed in the following paragraphs.

VI.2 MEANING OF RELIGION :

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, religion is spiritual adventure, it is the fulfilment of man's life. It is an experience which raises our being to highest extent. To explain, to quote some lines from 'Religion and Culture' -

"Religion is spiritual adventure....
Religion is fulfilment of man's life, an
experience in which every aspect of his
being is raised to its highest extent.
What is needed is a change of consciousness,
a rebornness, an inner evolution, a change
in understanding."¹

According to him every religion is an approach to the Supreme. It is not a theory but it is an actual life, a higher kind of life and a revelation. To explain, to quote some lines from his speech,

"Religion is a life to be lived, not a theory to be accepted or a belief to be adhered....There are varied approaches to the Divine. There may be different revelations of the Divine but they are all forms of the Supreme."²

Hence, he warned that soul should not be surrounded with a shell of national pride, racial superiority and empty presumptions of castes and classes.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "Religion for the Indian mind is life in God, love of man and charity for all."³

According to him, the religion should be understood in its largest sense. The great values, like, truth and love are the essence of religion.

He was of the opinion that the basic principle of all great religions is do good and overcome evil with good.

He believed that religion has two aspects; i.e. inward and outward. They are abhaya and ahimsa. By these principles, he wanted that man should be free from fear and

hate. To explain, to quote -

"Deepen your awareness, extend your love....abhaya, freedom from fear; ahimsā, freedom from hate. One is inward, the other is the outward aspect of the true religion."⁴

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, religion is not a dogma. He believed that religion should be lived, and not only believed. According to him, "To overcome the conflict and integrate the personality is the aim of religion."⁵

He believed that all religions teach the same and they treat human beings equally.

The Indian view of religion holds that religion is not a creed but a changed life. It can be judged by man's character and his behaviour. It is a spiritual training attained through discipline and training, i.e. sādhanā. Religion insists on freedom of inquiry. It insisted on logical reflection (Manan मनन) questioning (pariprasna परिप्रश्न) and inquiry (jijnāsa जिज्ञासा).⁶

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, religions i.e. the living faiths of mankind are different paths to the same goal. God is one, human nature is one and salvation is one, so the feeling of universal religion should be formed.

VI.3 NEED FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION :

Dr. Radhakrishnan was of the opinion that the general outlook on life makes a man truly virtuous, and for this spiritual training must be included. According to him, "If we exclude spiritual training in our institutions, we would be untrue to our whole historical development."⁷ According to him education is ultimately concerned with values and the fundamental principles of ethics are common to all religions, hence, these should certainly be taught to students.

One of the major aims of education is the development of the whole man. Religion ⁱⁿ is the widest sense should inspire all education; and hence, religious instruction should be included in the curriculum. The importance of the moral and spiritual instruction is in the building of character.

The Indian Constitution has laid down some principles regarding religious and moral instruction in the articles; i.e. 19, 21, 22 (1) and (2). By these Articles, the Indian citizen gets the right of worshipping his religion according to his own conscience. But Government will not spend the public funds for the benefit

of any particular religion. No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of the state funds. These are some of the principles stated in the Articles.

But even in institutions maintained by Government religion can be studied critically as a part of a course in general culture. Preaching is not permitted but a philosophical study is permitted. The State should not encourage any particular religion but it should provide opportunity for all religions. There are no special privileges or special disabilities for any religion. Thus, the Government has the intention of not to ban all religious education but to ban dogmatic or sectarian religious introduction in State schools. If sectarian creeds are taught then instead of developing the spirit of peace and brotherhood in them, the feeling of struggle and strife will be encouraged. According to the report of the University Education Commission (1948-49), "Our secularism is an act of supreme courage and sublime loyalty to our national youth."^e

In India each one is at liberty to approach God according to his capacity and inclination. This is the basis of our Secular State. According to the report of University Education Commission (1948-49) to be secular is

not to be religiously illiterate, but it is to be deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious."⁹

VI.4 INSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION :

Dr. Radhakrishnan points out the ways and means of imparting religious instruction. Almost all the educational commissions and committees which have come into existence have followed and recommended the ways and means of imparting religious education as they are very valuable, fundamental and basic. They are as follows :

Every morning before the school work, a short period of silent meditation should become the essential part of college life. Every individual should think of his soul as a candle of the Lord. It should enable him to find the spirit within and mould his life.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan students should be habituated to right emotions and it should be induced in them the formation of good moral, mental and physical habits. The values should be built in them by suggestions and persuasion and not by command or by imposing. The best method of suggestion would be by personal example (of teachers), daily life and work and books read from day-to-day.

In the early stages, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the books should contain not moral lessons but lives of great men. The books should be written with dignity, beauty and tenderness as they are for the early stage.

In the secondary schools stories which illustrate great moral and religious principles should be used.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, in college classes, ideas, events and leading figures associated with religious movements should be studied.

In the degree courses the selection from the holy books should be read to students like 'The Bhagavadgita', 'The Dhammapada', 'The Zend-Avesta', 'The Old Testament', 'The Gospel of St. John', 'The Quran', and 'The Guru Granth Sahib'.

Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) strongly felt that, a study of great books was essential in the university course, those could be the selections from Homer, or from Greek Tragedies, Plato, The Bible, Virgil, Shakespeare, and Tolstoy. Dr. Radhakrishnan sincerely believed in that the great social reformers' lives would touch the students' lives.¹⁰

For the higher classes, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49), the study of religious scriptures was essential. Religious instruction should be given to bring awareness of the great historic insights. The philosophies of the religions should be studied in relation to modern world. The views should be formulated as per modern world. The unity of all religions should be taught and the prejudices and misunderstandings should be eliminated. The inter-religious understanding should be created.

Dr. Radhakrishnan strongly advocated the study of great literature and philosophy, religion and arts for religious and moral education. According to him, there is a close relation between literature and religion and philosophy. The aim of literature is good of the world, 'Visva greyah Kavyan.'¹¹ The same aim can be of religion too. Literature is the channel between spiritual vision and human beings. The Rigveda, according to him, was not merely religion but poetry and literature. The Bible, The Avesta and The Quran were not merely classics of religion but were works of literature. According to him, the religious volumes, epics, plays, tales and folklore transmit to people the great ideals of harmony with nature and integrity of mind.

Dr. Radhakrishnan advocated the proper study of humanities including philosophy and religion. He wanted to alter the minds and hearts of the people, and hence, he believed that only by the study of humanities that could be done.

From the foregone discussion, it can be concluded that, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan the study of literature and philosophy, religion and arts were essential for religious and moral education.

**VI.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION COMMISSION (1948-49) ON
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION**

University Education Commission (1948-49) has made the following suggestions regarding religious and moral education.¹²

1) All educational institutions start work with a few minutes for silent meditation.

2) In the first year of the Degree course, lives of the great religious leaders like Gautama - the Buddha, Confucious, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Mohammad, Kabir, Nanak, Gandhi be taught.

3) In the second year, some selections of a universalist character from the scriptures of the world be studied.

4) In the third year, the central problems of the philosophy of religion be considered.

VI.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS :

From the foregone discussion it can be concluded that Dr. Radhakrishnan thought that the religious and moral education is essential for the development of personality. Even in the secular state like India, there is a place for religious and moral education. Though religious preaching is prohibited, the principles of religions can be studied as a part of any academic course. The University Education Commission (1948-49) has made some good and useful suggestions for each and every stage of education about religious and moral instruction. Almost all the educational commissions and committees have accepted the suggestions made by Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) as they are very valuable and basic.

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