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## DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

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It is an element of the tragic destiny of a high culture caught in a process of rapid change that it should suffer the vanishing of landmarks, the passing away of its moments of splendour and achievement. The passing away of the old is the inevitability of its destiny; the emergence of the new is perhaps its hope. Contemporary India has perhaps had more than her allotted share of this destiny. We have witnessed the eclipse of luminaries that once shone so brightly in the Indian firmament, in Politics, in Social life, in art and literature and in high Philosophy. The lights that were once the pride of India and the wonder of other lands are no more. Consequently, there is amongst us a sense of forlornness, a mood of abandonment and the sadness of nostalgia. But perhaps precisely at this late hour we require the wisdom as well as courage in coming up to the realization that it is now our turn to face up to the trials of the day. In this hour, of course, the memory of those who have gone before us and who have shown the true measure of what could be done may be a crucial element of our courage. This should of course prevent us from merely living in the shadow of the great ones; of all stances that of the epigones is the most crippling. Rather, the memory of those who have gone before us should instill in us a blend of reverence, homage, understanding and fresh resolve. It is in this spirit that the Indian Philosophical Quarterly wishes to record the close of a chapter of contemporary Indian Philosophy marked by the passing away of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan on 17th April, 1975 at Madras.

It is not necessary to detail the several incidents of Dr. Radhakrishnan's life of crowded glory. Born on 5th September, 1888 at Tirutani, he had his postgraduate studies in Philosophy at Madras Christian College, Tambaram, under the perceptive guidance of Prof. A. G. Hogg. It is significant to note that almost the very first philosophical writing of Dr. Radhakrishnan, namely a thesis on the ethics of the Vedanta was an interpretation and defence of the Hindu view of life. This initial effort seems to have implicitly set the pattern of his complex and rich philosophical career—

a sustained and eloquent interpretation of the philosophical wisdom of India. He has served as a teacher and professor of Philosophy at various institutes of higher learning in India as well as abroad. Besides, he has also served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University from 1931 to 1936 as well as the Vice-Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University in 1939. In 1926, he delivered the Upton Lectures at Oxford and the Haskell Lectures at Chicago as well as the Hibbert Lectures at London. In 1936, he was appointed to the chair of the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at Oxford; he retained this professorship for 16 years. During these years of high productivity Dr. Radhakrishnan primarily saw his philosophical mission as the vindication of the Indian view of life before the Western Philosophical world. Almost all the books and essays which flowed from his ever fertile pen were designed to this task. His two volumes on Indian Philosophy, as well as the "*The Idealist View of Life*" and "*The Hindu View of Life*" were dedicated to restore respectability to Indian Philosophic thought. It may not be too much to say that these works of Radhakrishnan won for Indian Philosophy a secure and honoured place in the world Philosophic forum.

Although by training, talent as well as inclination, Prof. Radhakrishnan was first and foremost a man of intellect, a contemplative and a seer, yet the momentum of his life plunged him into the arena of public affairs. The range of his experiences, outward as well as inner, is astonishing. He has visited, apart from U.K. and U.S.A. countries and cultures as far flung as China, Peru, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Bulgaria, East and Central Africa, Germany, Singapore, Indonesia and Japan. In terms of encounters with public personages and world historical individuals, his experiences have ranged all the way from Stalin to Mahatma Gandhi. But amidst all the vicissitudes of his career, he preserved a stability and equanimity of spirit—perhaps some might even liken this to the Sthita Prajna of the Gita.

In the platonic conception of the philosophic life, there is an ascent as well as a descent, a turing away from the trivia of empirical existence as well as a struggle with and a mastery over them. It is a flight from the vulgarities of politics to the values of statesmanship. In this matter too, the life of Dr. Radhakrishnan has con-

formed to the paradigm of a philosophic life for he was called upon to officiate as the Vice-President and the President of the Republic of India. Many have recalled the words of Plato in this context. But the truth in the platonic dictum has its own shadow, as it were, as evidenced by the Syracusan experiences of Plato himself. The discipline of the cave has its own trials and tribulations, especially when the hard realities of a country seeking desperately to emerge out of the slough of degradation meet with the visions of a philosopher which are *sub specie aeternitatis*. Inevitably, Dr. Radhakrishnan could not have been spared some of these torments of a conflict between the Philosophy of spirit and the Politics of poverty. But whatever might have been these inner troubles and vexations of spirit, Dr. Radhakrishnan bore them with urbanity; the greek virtue of *sophrosyne* never deserted him. His retirement from public life, therefore, was marked by an inward grace and all lack of cavil and carping.

If one may view Dr. Radhakrishnan's philosophical pilgrimage in the round, one may perhaps come to realise that he has bent all his time and talent for three things—a revitalization of Indian Philosophic thought, a synthesis of Eastern and Western wisdom and the elucidation of the idealist conception of man. He struggled to achieve these in the context in which he found himself. The context has vastly changed, but the tasks still remain. The revitalization of Indian Philosophy may have to be pursued in other ways and with different techniques. So also the possibility of a synthesis will have to be striven for in new areas and in terms of different concepts, and lastly the working out of a conception of man is still an urgent task, for, if there is one crowning function that Philosophy can perform, it is the achievement of humanization. We believe that this is the legacy that Dr. Radhakrishnan has left us.

Editor

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