

Module 5 : S. Radhakrishnan

Section 5 : The Spirit in Man

Mere reasoning cannot provide a genius. All creative work in science and philosophy, in art and life is having as its inspiration, experience. It is not simple experience. It is intuitive experience. Radhakrishnan is in favor of intuition. He will not accept that intellect is more important to have the highest possible. And he feels that mere intellect cannot achieve anything that is monumental. He strongly feels that it is intuition when added to all our efforts through intellect or through the creative work like art and the like we will be achieving the best nay the highest. In favor of this argument Radhakrishnan cites some points to observe. They are:

1. All creative work in Science, philosophy, in art and life is inspired by intuitive experience.
2. Intuitive life, spiritual wisdom belongs to the highest range of mental life.
3. Great scientific discoveries are due to the inventive genius of the creative thinkers.
4. Creative work is synthetic insight. It advances by leaps.
5. Genius is extreme sensibility to Truth.
6. Some sense of aesthetic feeling prevails which proves the very state of creative experience.
7. The genius discovers the meaning which binds the facts which remain distinct and separate from ordinary understanding. It is an intuitive grasp of the dynamic principle organizing the facts successfully.

Radhakrishnan thus tries to show a soft corner towards the intuitive type of experiences within his philosophical discourses. He tries to show the importance this intuition within human life space. He says that

1. Great intuition arises out of a matrix of rationality. No one unfamiliar with abstract analysis can hit on the rational insight. The successful practice of intuition requires previous study and assimilation of a multitude of facts and laws. We may take it that great intuitions arise out of a matrix of rationality.
2. The process of discovery is only rational synthesis.
3. For purposes of communication the insight has to be set forth as a rational synthesis⁴⁷.

Finally we have to understand that. It is the spark of the genius that lights the fire and makes it burn. Intellect supplies the necessary tools. They are quite valuable, but they are not knowledge. An intuition is not a construction. There is a difference between external synthesis and inner development etc. The discovered idea goes beyond all formulation and schematism. It arises out of profound experience. Imagination sometimes appears to be the cause of invention. But if it is not vivified by intuition it will not help. And also that intellectual inaction seems to be prelude to the intuitive flash.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Page 139-140

Radhakrishnan says that relaxation is very necessary. Then only creative work can be achieved. He writes:

We must allow the intellect to lie fallow, let the object soak into the subsoil of our mental life and elicit its reaction to it. In addition to reflecting on the facts with our conscious powers, we should commune with them with the whole energy of our body and mind, for it is the whole mind that will reach the whole object. The essence of things cannot resist the concentrated attack of the whole mind⁴⁸.

Intuitive ideas spring in those deep silences which interrupt our busy lives. In them the mind is brought under the grasp of the spirit. It is then that our deeper consciousness grows and becomes intensely aware of the nature of the object⁴⁹.

The truth is not so much produced as achieved. Radhakrishnan says that the religious demand for purity and peace of mind establishes the preparation for the highest knowledge. Intuition arises out of our senses. There cannot be any control over them. The upward urges are a creation of the unconscious and unwilled⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Ibid., page 142

⁴⁹ Ibid., Page 141-142

⁵⁰ Ibid., Page 142

Radhakrishnan after a long exposition of the characteristics of a genius with intuition tries to describe the characteristics of the spirit within us. He thinks that it is the very act of inspiration which is a manifestation of the spirit that universally exists. This says Radhakrishnan can be known by a religious man. Radhakrishnan is not at all satisfied with the explanations of the psychoanalysts. He says that:

The genius is not one with exceptional access to the primitive elements of our being. But one who gives us a foretaste of the spiritual man to be. He has become aware not of the suppressed primitive desire but of the greatness of spirit which lifts him into a higher state of being than the normal⁵¹.

He asks us to regard them as suggestions of an undeveloped power in us. He asks us to analyze our intuitive consciousness which insights us of our oneness with the indivisible universal spirit. This he calls as a greatness of our soul when it is the real, profound, calm and joyous one which supports and sustains all manifestations. But Radhakrishnan says that unless we are reborn we cannot attain this greatness of the soul. This enables one to attain the heights of spirituality.

⁵¹ Ibid., Page 169

It remakes one to be a new one. It is due to the fact that there is a spirit within man. Because of this presence only we are able to enjoy the great works of art of the leaders or the lords of humanity who had created them. This becomes the crux of Radhakrishnan's argument for the existence of a hidden and the most beautiful spirit in man. It exists in a liberated state in the Saints and the great people of creativity. They cause in us a heightened awareness of the meaning of life. Radhakrishnan writes:

They do not simply please our senses or interest our mind, but touch our souls and change our being. We acquire through their aid a heightened awareness of the meaning of life.

There is no conclusive proof of the reality of the spiritual world than acquaintance with the saints of God⁵².

And Radhakrishnan calls them as the fruits of the future men. He writes:

They are the heralds of the infinite, the first fruits of the future man.

Radhakrishnan in his exaltation feels that:

We have all to be reborn, reveal our potential son-ship, share in all the fullness of divine nature though a long process of development and illumination separates us from that goal⁵³.

⁵² Page 164

⁵³ Page 165

Saints and the Genii of the world history will make the men of the world to grow in their spiritual

essence and to achieve a heaven on earth.

This can be achieved with the self-integration. It starts with intuitive insight. In this status the mind with its total potentiality tries to know the truth. Actually this is a realization of an undivided unitary life. This contains intellect, emotion, imagination and interest in it. All of them will form the essence of spiritual life. This integrates personality of the individual self. It is a state of discrimination. It prefers discernment than cleverness. It expects purity of spirit than the intellectual training. It enables one to achieve an intimate acquaintance with reality and brings closer to that reality. This becomes the unique and new experience. It is the intuitive experience which stakes us to the new levels of consciousness. These levels only will contain the capacity to know the highest truths. Radhakrishnan writes:

The life of spirit is essentially creative in its character. We cannot create through the exercise of intellect any more than a flower can evolve in obedience to a formula.

Creation is the result of the growth of self, the expansion of consciousness. For this we want religion as an uplifting power and not as a confession of belief or a demonstration of God.

Religion is not science nor is church an academy. It is the perception of the eternal in the finite⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Page 167

Radhakrishnan is not in agreement with that of the psychoanalytic mechanisms of defense reaction, Substitution and Sublimation. They will sublimate love into spiritual devotion. These mechanisms may help to repress the human instinct in the background corridors of consciousness. When they get frustrated they turn to be neurotic and unbalance our personalities. It is not the balance of the mind Radhakrishnan strongly feels that. He feels that the methods of Yoga try to change the very personality of our individual selves. He says that a totally new and unlearned integration of the self is achieved. We have to get rid of our individual passions. These passions form the bondages of the self. The Hindu religious Yoga enables us to achieve this in this respect. We have to discriminate between the instinct and intuition. The scope of instinct as unconscious is a limited one. The instinct keeps us at a lower level. It is a loss for we are distanced from a greater thing, the wholeness. To recover that wholeness those lost units which have lost their contact with the whole we shall be reborn. This becomes the secret of spiritual life. And this is the mystery of the kingdom of god. Radhakrishnan says:

Spiritual life is not inertia or indifference but is light and freedom, peace and power; spiritual realization is not hysterical trance or drug intoxication, for the life of the seer takes on a new depth, a marked increase in coherence and character. There is a general enrichment of personality. It is more life and not less⁵⁵.

He criticizes even the irrational dogmas of the religions. He asks us to be rational and critical of these practices. Thus Radhakrishnan tries to prove the very existence of a spirit in man, in every man which can be brought to light with our religious experiences. He writes:

The value of the ontological as well as the moral proof lies in this fact that our deepest convictions give us trustworthy knowledge of ultimate reality perhaps the only knowledge possible.

The validity of divine existence is not founded on anything external or accidental but is felt by the spirit in us⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Page 169-170

⁵⁶ Page 173-174