

The Hindu View of Life by Radhakrishnani
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To Western eyes, Hinduism appears as a confusing array of gods, mystics, gurus, holy cows, temples and beggars. The great Indian scholar, philosopher, statesman and former president of India (1962-67), Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, explains for the Westerner, in easily understood terms, classical Hindu thought.

Hinduism is not a doctrinal religion, but a way of life and experience. It has no fixed intellectual beliefs. "Intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realization."... "Hinduism is more a way of life than a form of thought. While it gives absolute liberty in the world of thought it enjoins a strict code of practice. The theist and the atheist, the skeptic and the agnostic may all be Hindus if they accept the Hindu system of culture and life."

Hinduism seeks to absorb every religion that comes to India. It is universalistic and syncretistic by nature. Many different beliefs may be held within the Hindu fold. "Every tradition which helps man to lift his soul to God is held up as worthy of adherence."

..."Suppose a Christian approaches a Hindu teacher for spiritual guidance, he would not ask his Christian pupil to discard his allegiance to Christ but would tell him that his idea of Christ was not adequate, and would lead him to a knowledge of the real Christ, the incorporate supreme. Every God accepted by Hinduism is elevated and ultimately identified with the central Reality which is one with the deeper self of man."

Radhakrishnan has lectured extensively in the West. However he did not come to understand the heart of the Christian faith. He equates the latter with "blind belief in dogma". He pictures the Christian view of heaven and hell as states of "eternal idleness". Since God is everywhere and everything, hell cannot exist. "There is no Hell, for that means there is a place where God is not, and there are sins, which exceed his love. If the infinite love of God is not a myth, universal salvation is a certainty. But until it is achieved, we shall have error and imperfection. In a continuously evolving universe evil and error are inevitable, though they are gradually diminishing."

Anyone interested in learning about Hinduism from India's finest scholar and writer should purchase this book. However, I recall a remark made by an Indian Christian scholar about the difference between the Hinduism of scholars and the Hinduism of the masses. He said that to understand the difference you must visit India's villages and temples and witness for yourself the impact of folk Hinduism upon the masses. India's poverty, high birth and death rates, and the still prevalent caste system cannot be pictured apart from the religion of the majority of its citizens.

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