CHAPTER - II

MAJOR INFLUENCES ON RADHAKRISHNAN’S THOUGHT

The East is East and the West is West, the twain shall never meet.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Wrong as we believe Kipling was, with respect to the future, he was certainly right with respect to the past

F.C.S. NORTHRUP

East is East, and West is West, God forbid that it should be otherwise, but the twain must meet in Unity, Peace and Understanding. It must lead both to holy wedlock before the common altar of humanity.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Whether we like it or not, East and West have come together and can no more part.

SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

2.1 THE EAST AND THE WEST

For reasons unknown, the world is conceived as divided into two opposite camps - the East and the West. Taking the Mediterranean coast as the dividing line we have called the world, East of it as Orient and the West of it, as Occident, turning them into two separate worlds, distant and unbridgeable.
We characterise the West as modern, objective, rational, individualistic, freedom-loving, realistic, logical, dynamic (activism) etc. and the East as ancient, subjective, intuitive, idealistic, mystical, passive, lazy, etc. The relation between the two is considered as one of contrast, conflict and incompatibility. Count Herman Keyserling who went round the world in the second decade of this century mentioned in his diary, about the people of the East as conventional, passive, contented, inexact, inefficient, fatalistic, pessimistic and so on. He wanted to Westernize the East. Likewise, Albert Schweitzer drew a contrast between East and West, as life-negating and life-affirming, respectively and wanted to Westernize the East as a solution to the former's life-denying characteristics.

Many farsighted and noble citizens of the world have heralded the call for a synthesis of the East and West. Rabindranath Tagore advocated the building of One World through an harmonious blending of the best elements in the East and the West. He suggested Eastern mysticism to be reconciled with Western rationalism, and the spirit of social service of the Occident to be combined with the Oriental spiritual love. He founded Viswabharati University and invited people from every nook and corner of the world to work, study and live together as one Human Family, for the University, was a symbol of One World, to him.

In his book, "The Meeting of East and West", Prof.F.S.C.Northrop attempted to evolve the concept of "One World" at the level of metaphysics by bringing East and West together. This he realized, cannot be achieved by Westernizing the East, but through a sincere hope of working for the synthesis
of the two. He advised the Western philosophers and religious leaders: "to give up their prevalent notion that Eastern philosophy at best only says vaguely what Western philosophy says clearly and that Oriental religion only says imperfectly or negatively, what Western religion says perfectly and positively".\(^1\) Similarly, he suggested to the Eastern philosophers and religious sages to: "give up their prevalent notion that all the philosophical and religious truths and values defining the ends of life are in the Orient and that all the Orient needs to learn from the West are, its instrumental and technological values of applied Science".\(^2\)

Professor Max Mueller who translated and interpreted many an ancient Indian text, to the Western world, sought after a world of human brotherhood, undivided by barriers of every kind. He said:

> Where the Greeks saw barbarians we see brethren, where the Greeks saw nations, we see mankind toiling and suffering, separated by oceans, divided by language and severed by national enmity - yet evermore tending under divine control towards the fulfillment of that inscrutable purpose for which the World was created and man placed in it, bearing the image of God.\(^3\)

No doubt there are a number of contrasts between the life-patterns of the Western and Eastern world. But they need not be treated as irreconcilable conflicts or contradictions, for they are only different but not incompatible and not identical but can subsist together. It is possible to achieve a World Society with the two sets of values by bringing about a reconciliation, between them. Contrasts can be synthesized into a harmonious whole.
Radhakrishnan has rightly been hailed as the liaison officer and a bridge-builder between the East and the West. He has the unique distinction of constructing a comprehensive philosophy out of the best elements chosen from the Indian and the Western systems of thought, having been "born" to Indian Philosophy and "nurtured" in European Philosophy. In Education and temperament, Radhakrishnan is a combination of the East and the West, for he acquired his education in schools and colleges run and taught by Western missionaries and temperamentally he was a typical Hindu of a "true type." Throughout his life, he strove hard to develop: "a philosophy which will combine the best of European humanism and Asiatic Religion, a philosophy more profound and more living than either, endowed with greater spiritual and ethical force which will conquer the hearts of men."\(^4\)

The life and thought of Radhakrishnan vividly demonstrate the meeting of East and West and remain as a standing witness to testify to the enrichment of the experiences in the life of the 20th century man through the salubrious effects of a harmonious synthesis. He wrote:

I do believe that the great Idealistic tradition has in it the possibility of bringing the East and the West together in closer union on the plane of mind and spirit... If the unity is to be sustained it can only be by the development of cultural and spiritual Unity.\(^5\)

While synthesising the ancient and the modern and of the East and the West, Radhakrishnan’s synthetic vision amply provides for a comprehensive perspective, capable of doing justice to the contrasting emphases of both East and West. He attempted to bring about East and West
closer to each other through an effective method of finding identical expressions in Western as well as Eastern traditions. He did not hesitate to appreciate and incorporate certain concepts into his scheme of thought from the alien traditions, whenever he considered them valuable.

His art of synthesising different contrasting opposite principles into a harmonious whole, can be compared to Kant's attempts for reconciliation of rationalism and empiricism and Hegel's dialectic method of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis as a technique. Sankara also attempted a synthesis of different Philosophical notions stemming from the Upanisads as the thesis, Buddhism, its contrast as anti-thesis and his Advaita Vedāntā as synthesis. Most probably Radhakrishnan must have been influenced in this art of synthesising, by Hegel, Kant and Sankara who were Absolute Idealists and synthesis played a very important role in the construction of their philosophies.

His comprehensive vision did not confine merely to the blending of the two traditions of the East and the West but extended far beyond, to the formation and development of a World Philosophy which is neither Eastern nor Western but includes and transcends both. In his words: "Even as our political problem is to bring East and West together in a common brotherhood which transcends racial differences, so in the world of philosophy we have to bring about a cross fertilization of ideas".⁶

With such an aim, he sought after one perennial and Universal philosophy which is found in all lands and cultures, in the Upanisads and
Buddha, Plato and Platinous, in Hillel and Philo, Jesus and Paul and Medieval mystics of Islam.

Radhakrishnan, says P.T.Raju, is the protagonist of a new school of cultural synthesis which is contributing to the formation and growth of the idea of World Philosophy. He is not only an interpreter of the culture and civilization of the East to the West and the West to the East, but also a formulator of a new synthesis.7

Radhakrishnan, says D.M.Dutta, has selected for constructive synthesis, the idealistic point of view and emphasizing the basic unity between the idealistic traditions of India and the West, he conceives a reconciliation between the two.8

C.A. Moore justly calls Radhakrishnan as a synthesizer of the old and the new and of the East and the West. As a veritable genius for synthesis, Radhakrishnan takes middle paths between the extremes in the old and the new, in the West and the East; but this is not the middle path of mere eclecticism or mere moderation. This is done through a keen logical analysis combined with high spiritual insight which enabled Radhakrishnan to transcend and combine contrasts into significant synthesis. In his interpretations, the East looses the extremes which the West found objectionable and it was no longer inscrutable to the West.

Commenting on Radhakrishnan's works, Bernard Phillips remarked:

His (Radhakrishnan) life and thought provided a vivid demonstration of the meeting of East and West and testify to the enrichment of experience, which such a synthesis can effect.9
In education and in temperament, Radhakrishnan is a combination of East and the West, says E.S.Brightsman.\(^{10}\)

No one has done more than Radhakrishnan to interpret East and West to each other. The two are drawing nearer together, said W.R.Inge.\(^{11}\)

In the words of A.R.Wadia:

Prof. Radhakrishnan is a unique figure in the philosophical world today. There can be no denying that, out of his pioneering attempts may yet arise a new philosophy that will be neither Indian nor European but of the World, as science has come to be.\(^{12}\)

Our fundamental differences, which are due to our nationalities, races, languages and historical circumstances, are unfortunately preventing the development of a true Human Community of One World. Radhakrishnan says: "If we are to find a solution for the differences which divide races and nations today, it must be through the recognition of the essential oneness of the Modern World, spiritually and socially, economically and politically".\(^{13}\)

A synthesis of these opposites and differences, is no doubt an ideal goal slow to reach, but we must strive to realise such unity, for it brings about change and progress by taking us beyond the differences. Radhakrishnan observes:

For the first time in the history of mankind, the consciousness of the unity of the world has dawned on us.\(^{14}\)
East and West are both moving out of their historical past towards a way of thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind. East and West are fertilizing each other not for the first time.\textsuperscript{15}

A new humanism is on the horizon but this time it embraces the whole mankind. We can no more escape being members of a world community.\textsuperscript{16}

We need, not merely a closer contact between East and West, but a closer union, a meeting of minds and a union of hearts. The separation of East and West is over. The history of the New World, the One World has began.\textsuperscript{17}

2.2 \textbf{MAJOR INFLUENCES}

Creative thought of a philosopher cannot be judged or understood in its right perspective without a deep study of the background factors that shaped the mind of the thinker and influenced him in the formative periods. The conditions of the later part of the 19th century and the early 20th century in the field of philosophy and religion, particularly in India and the West, had a heavy bearing on the mind of Radhakrishnan whose subtle vision could evaluate the philosophical situation of his times. The Philosophic scene and the religious situation have contributed very much to the formation and development of Radhakrishnan's independent thought. The following are some of the Major Influences that shaped his synthetic mind:
2.2.1 Philosphic scene in 19th and Early 20th Century India
2.2.1.1 Impact of Western Culture - Rise of Modern Religious Movements

After the full establishment of the British empire on the Indian soil during the 19th century, there was a strong impact of Western culture, education and literature, politics, science and Technology, Secularism and religion on the Indian civilization. It was indeed a confrontation between two great and distinct civilizations, having their one separate identity in culture, language, Religions, Philosophies, life-styles, values, Political, educational and social systems. The impact had a deep effect on the Indian life and thought of the time. The dominant civilization of the West made inroads into every area of life of the Indian.

It began to break the age old customs and practices and demolish the traditional systems, shaking the social fabric. At one time it was thought that the Western civilization would just replace the Indian. It was at this stage, Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of Brahma Samaj appeared on the scene followed by Debendranath and Keshab Chandra Sen.

Swami Dayananda Saraswathi of Arya Samaj and Swami Vivekananda of Ramakrishna Mission defended Hinduism strongly, to thwart the Western influence on the Hindu religion and culture, to some extent. By this time, the Oriental Scholar Max Mueller and others completed translations of some of the religious texts of the Hindus from Sanskrit to English, under the title "The Sacred Books of the East Series" These text came as a support to the
Hindu tradition. The younger generation of Indians who studied in schools and colleges under Western education had access to the study of these translated religious books in English. Some of them attempted to uphold Hinduism through a fresh interpretation of their religious texts in the light of modern trends in the Western thought and religion. This kind of work was done by Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, Rabindranath Tagore and several others, duly inspired by Ram Mohan Roy as well as Dayananda Saraswathi of the previous generation.

2.2.1.2 The Oriental Scholars (European Indologists)

During the later part of the 19th century many of the Oriental scholars from Europe learnt Sanskrit, translated many of the Indian Religious texts into English and published them under the general title "The Sacred Books of the East Series", by Max Mueller and others.

Each translator wrote an introduction and commented on each text that was translated into English. Some of these introductions contained some comparisons and contrasts between the Western philosophical notions as well as the Christian theological doctrines on the one hand and the Indian religious and philosophical notions on the other. The Orientalists considered the system of Vedāntā as the highest Philosophical system, among the various systems and religious traditions of India. Some of them made objective evaluations and offered their appreciative and critical views on Indian Philosophy and religious literature in separate books and articles they published. Though the Publication of "The Sacred Books of the East Series", was received with
appreciation and gratitude by the public it has produced a mixed reaction among the Western educated Hindu scholars and Christian Missionaries of the period, who read them. Some of the names of the Oriental Scholars (European Idologists) include Sir William Jones, Colebrooke, H.H. Wilson, Max Mueller, Paul Deussen, Oldenberg, George Thibaut, A.B. Keith, Edward Gought, J.E. Carpenter, Richard Garb, J.Hopkins, Schrader, Rhys Davids, Pussin and others.

2.2.1.3 Critical and Appreciative Views of the Christian Missionary Scholars

After the establishment of Universities, a number of Missionary colleges, with distinguished foreign Professors on the staff, were started in different parts of India and prominent among them were, Christian College, Madras and Scottish Church College, Calcutta. Revds. William Miller, Charles Gooper, Alfred Hogg of Madras Christian College and Revds. William Hastie, Henry Stephen and W.S. Urquhart, of Scottish Church College, were among the missionary scholars, who made a careful study and wrote independent books as well as articles to foreign journals on Indian Philosophy. There were also other missionary scholars like Revds. Nicol Menicol, J.N. Farquhar, Sydney Cave, who were associated only with Christian missions in India. They too wrote under "Religious Quest of India Series", a number of books and articles on the doctrines of Indian Philosophy, comparing them with the christian.
These missionaries were of the conviction that Christianity is a rational and universal religion and that it is their duty as Christians to propagate the Gospel Message to all lands. Their study of Hindu Scriptures in Sanskrit or English (translations) or in both, revealed to them that systems of Hinduism in general and *Vedāntā* in particular were highly Philosophical. In their enthusiasm and eagerness to show the uniqueness and significance of their religion, the missionary scholars, analysed and evaluated the Hindu Philosophical notions, in the light of Western Philosophical and religious doctrines. They wrote with appreciation and criticism. Some of them even attempted to show Christianity as the "crown of Hinduism". (This type of work was done only during the early part of the 20th century).

On the whole, the missionary community's observations on the Hindu scriptures were found to be critical despite their appreciation for some aspects of Hinduism. This has brought about a reaction among the English educated Hindus who had some knowledge of their religious traditions. They wrote a number of books and articles disapproving the missionary criticisms against their religious doctrines asserting the logical soundness of their notions, particularly of the *Advaita Vedāntā* of Sankara, which they believed to be the highest philosophical system in India.
2.2.1.4 Some charges levelled against Indian Philosophy

The Oriental Scholars and several Missionary scholars have expressed appreciation and spoke highly of Indian Philosophy and religion. But there were some, who, while recognizing the value of Indian philosophy pointed out its defects; a few of them even very damagingly against the Indian tradition. The following are some of the main charges levelled against Indian Philosophy:

1. Indian Philosophy and its culture are highly pessimistic in their attitude towards the world.

2. Indian Philosophy contains superstitious beliefs and dogmas. It is more a theology than a philosophy. A philosophy based on dogma cannot be a true one. Its Philosophy is a worthless scholasticism of the middle ages and a mere play upon words. There is nothing similar to the Philosophies of Plato or Aristotle or even Plotinus or Bacon.

3. Indian Philosophy for some meant two or three notions about māyā or the delusiveness of the world, Karma, a belief in fate and Thyaga or Asceticism - the desire to be rid of the flesh.

4. Indian Philosophy does not contain ethics and it has virtually no place in it. There is practically no ethical philosophy within the frontiers of Hindu thinking.

5. Philosophy in India is remaining stationary for centuries and represents an endless process of threshing old straw.
6. Indian *Vedānta* contains *Brahma* as the Supreme Being which is an empty abstraction and an infinite blank.

2.2.1.5 Challenge of Christian Critics

Radhakrishnan had the unique privilege of studying in the schools and Colleges run by Christian Missionaries, where he became familiar with the teaching of the New Testament. To his astonishment he found the missionaries to be bitter critics of the beliefs and practices of his ancestral Hindu religion. As expressed in some of his writings, he was deeply hurt by the treatment of the missionaries accorded to Hinduism. He wrote:

> My pride as Hindu aroused by the enterprise and eloquence of Swami Vivekananda was deeply hurt by the treatment accorded to Hinduism in missionary institutions. I was somewhat annoyed that truly religious people - as many christian missionaries undoubtedly were - could treat as subjects for derision, doctrines that others held in deepest reverence. (My search for truth). They (my christian teachers in missionary institutions) were teachers of philosophy, commentators interpreters, apologists for the christian way of thought and life, but were not in the strict sense as the term, seekers of truth. By their criticism of Indian thought, they disturbed my faith and shook the traditional props on which I leaned.\(^\text{18}\)

The criticisms levelled against the Hindu religion were of a two fold character. It is intellectually incoherent and ethically unsound. The theoretical foundations as well as the practical fruits of the religion were challenged. I remember the cold sense of reality, the depressing feeling of defeat that crept over me..... What is wrong with Hindu religion? How can we make it somewhat more relevant to the intellectual climate and social environment of our time? Such were the questions which roused my interest.\(^\text{19}\)
With such a strong resolve he was engaged in the serious study of Indian Philosophy while he was working as a teacher of Philosophy at Presidency College, Madras and thereafter. Even as a second year student of M.A. class, Radhakrishnan wrote a thesis on "The Ethics of Vedāntā" to establish that Vedāntā attaches importance to ethical values, in reply to the criticism that it contains no ethics. "The challenge of the critics" paved the way and gave direction to the general trends of his future thought. When he realized that his faith was shaken to its very foundations, he keenly sought after a philosophy and religion which could be at once rational, spiritual and universal. For him the need for philosophy arises. When faith is shaken, he was cured of this faith by his christian teachers.  

When he explains how he became interested in philosophy he observes: "The practical bearing of philosophy on life became my central interest from the time I took up the study of this subject. My training in philosophy which began in the years in 1905-1909 in Madras Christian College, with its atmosphere of christian thought, aspiration and endeavour led me take a special interest in the religious implications of metaphysics"

Thus Radhakrishnan became an apologetic champion and a strong defender of Hinduism, interpreting the doctrines in the Western religious and philosophical thought-forms. He was convinced that "Religion must establish itself as the rational way of living", and it "must express itself in reasonable thought, fruitful action and right social institutions". Religion for him was not a creed or a code but an insight into Reality. His studies led him to accept a spiritual and non-dogmatic view of religion. Such a religion in his view should
not be based on private revelation or on the authority of the Scripture or a Council, but should spring "naturally from the light of reason and the insight of experience".

2.2.1.6 Emergence of Vedanta as the highest Philosophy in India

Ever since Ram Mohan Roy projected the system of Vedānta as the highest Philosophical school in India duly supported by the Orientalists; it gained importance as the summit of Indian Philosophy at home and in the West. The pre-suppositions of Vedānta were of Universal significance and hence drew the attention of many a leading mind. Valuable contributions were made to the development of Vedānta by many thinkers during the ancient and medieval periods by way of exegetical commentaries and treatises on the Vedantic Triad. (Canons of Vedanta). During the Modern period Ram Mohan Roy and after him Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha gave a fresh reappraisal of the system of Vedanta. Their re-interpretations on many philosophical notions gave a new Weltanschauung to Vedanta that inspired the thinkers who came after them. Their philosophical views served as an impetus and inspiration to the later generation of thinkers who could develop the doctrines of Vedānta further through a vigorous analysis and interpretation. Having recognized their rich spiritual heritage, the Hindu leaders realized the urgent need to bring about certain essential changes in the ancient religious thought of India to suit the modern conditions. They attempted to accommodate and absorb certain trends in Western civilization into the fabric of Indian culture and religious thought without affecting the essential root-bases of the ancient tradition. Inspired by the teachings, courage and confidence of Swami
Vivekananda in defence of Hindu doctrines and his fresh interpretations of Vedāntā, Radhakrishan undertook the task of restating the Vedantic doctrines to the Western world in their own philosophical thought forms and religious doctrinal patterns. Radhakrishnan had great admiration for Vivekananda who propagated to the Western World the significance of the Advaita Vedāntā of Sankara as the highest philosophy of India.

2.2.1.7 Philosophical Views of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, the eloquent speaker at the Parliament of Religions and a strong defender of Hinduism, inspired and influenced young Radhakrishnan immensely. Being an old student of Philosophy at Scottish College, Calcutta, Swamiji had sound knowledge of European Philosophy. He acquainted himself with the knowledge of Indian Philosophical texts, from Sanskrit and English sources. Thus well versed both in European and Indian Philosophies, he delivered Lectures in America and Europe on various topics concerning the religion and philosophy of India, in the language and philosophical terminology of the West, to clarify, many of the misunderstood conceptions and to answer several charges levelled against Indian thought. Many of his Lectures delivered in Europe, America and in India dealt with philosophical and religious subjects such as: Absolute and God, Religion and Philosophy, intellectual and experiential knowledge, conception of māyā, Reality of the World, Apparent and Real Man, Ideal of a Universal Religion, Science and Religion, Involution and Evolution, Goals of Religion, Methods of Self-Realization and Practical Vedāntā.
Radhakrishnan dwelt upon all these themes in his studies in Vedāntā which have had a bearing on his mind when he interpreted and synthesized many of the philosophical and religious notions of India and the West.

2.2.1.8 Academic Philosophy in India

Right from the beginning Philosophy and Logic were taught at the under graduate and post graduate levels in the colleges affiliated to the three Indian Universities established in 1857. The missionary scholars who were teaching philosophy subjects in affiliated colleges were trainees from British Universities. Philosophy that these missionary scholars learnt during the later part of the 19th century was Idealism. They had sound knowledge of Neo-Hegelism as developed by the British thinkers T.H. Green, John Caird, Edward Caird, F.H. Bradley, Pringle Pattison and Bosanquet which come to be known as British Idealism. The students who had philosophical education in these colleges studied British Idealism particularly Bradley’s "Appearance and Reality" and Bosanquet’s objective Idealism. About this time the Oriental scholars (the European Indologists) found that there were a number of similarities between the Absolute Idealism of Bradley and Sankaras’ Advaita Vedāntā which was also an Absolute Idealism. Since Absolute Idealism was the highest philosophy in Britain, the Indian students of philosophy of the period, most of whom were Hindus with some Sankrist learning, found it favourable to compare Advaita Vedāntā of Sankara with Absolute Idealism of Hegel and Bradley. It is evident from Radhakrishnan’s writings that his knowledge of Greek and European Philosophies was every wide and comprehensive for he studied under Prof.A.G.Hogg who was an admired student of A.S. Pringle
Pattison, at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Among the Western thinkers whose writings influenced him deeply were Plato, Plotinus, Kant, Bradley and Bergson. He was well acquainted with Western classics, poets, Dramatists, and Philosophers of his time. His writings abounded with citations from Goethe, Dante, Shakespeare, Shelley, Byron and Bernard Shaw.

2.2.1.9 **Realistic Interpretations of Advaita in early 20th century**

The critical observations of the Orientalists and Christian Missionary scholars disturbed the minds of many learned Hindus. Some of these English educated Hindus, namely, V.J. Kirtikar, Kokileswara Sastri and P.D. Shastri and others who were well known Advaitins during the early twentieth Century and had sound knowledge of their religious thought, felt that many of the Hindu doctrines were misunderstood and wrongly interpreted by some of the Oriental and Missionary scholars. Their criticisms against Advaita Vedāntā of Sankara, as acosmic, depicting Hinduism as a world-denying religion, on the basis of the Concepts of māyā (world as an illusion) and sanyāsa (world withdrawal and renunciation) were, in the opinion of these Advaitins, a gross misinterpretation of the original Hindu doctrines deviating from their earlier meaning.

In reply to the critics, the Advaitins wrote books and articles to clarify and to re-state the doctrines to suit the modern conditions, in support of Vedāntā. Their discussion centered round the doctrine of māyā of Sankara which seems to have pictured the world more in a negative way than positive. **They** gave a realistic interpretation of the concept of māyā and allied doctrines.
offering a positive outlook towards the world. They quoted in support of their arguments many texts based, not only from the writings of Sankara but also from Post-Sankara Advaitins. Radhakrishnan also gave a fresh realistic interpretation to the Concept of māyā of Sankara "to save the world and give it a meaning", duly inspired, probably by these Advaitins also of the earlier period, apart from the influence of Tagore on the some concept, as claimed by himself.

2.2.1.10 The Conservatives and Liberals among the early 20th Century Hindus

Due to the impact of Western education, culture, religion, science and technology and its politics on Indian culture and social life, there was a tremendous upheaval in the Hindu society during the first quarter of 20th century. As a result, (of the reaction) there arose two distinct groups among the Hindus. There were some English-educated Hindus who styled themselves as liberals of radicals and the others, the orthodox or conservatives in spiritual matters, who wanted to conserve the traditional positions of their ancient heritage.

The Conservatifs were indifferent to Western influence and were mostly intellectual and moral aristocrats with a cold attitude and detachment towards Western styles of living. They believed that there was not much to learn from the immoral and the competitive West. Hence they wanted to hold on to the ancient tradition and its pristine purity of simple and contented life by following the Sanatana Dharma of the past. On the other hand, the
Radicals, highly influenced by the Western style of life adopted a philosophy of naturalistic rationalism and humanism, showing utter dislike to follow the traditional ways of living which they considered inferior before the superior West. Some of them even suggested a replacement of the Indian culture with the Western modes of dynamic life and scientific temper. They felt this as necessary, if India has to thrive and flourish in future, through progressive development.

Radhakrishnan recognized the futility of these two opposite extreme positions taken by liberal and conservative Hindus, in a world where aircraft, steamships, railways, telegraphs and better means of communication were linked and distant men were drawn closer together. He suggested to the radicals who were looking for a new hope and to the conservatives who were standing for the ancient learning to understand one another in the light of the conditions existing in the modern world.

He pointed out to the conservatives that we cannot live an isolated life in the present century, and summoned them to join the mainstream on the road to progress. He wanted that ancient Indian philosophy should be presented to the Western world so that Indian systems of thought could act and react in the context of world of progress, like the flowing river-water that constantly renews itself from fresh springs without remaining a stagnant pool.

Radhakrishnan wrote:

The conservative mind must open itself to the necessity of change. Since it is not sufficiently alive to this need, we find in the realm of philosophy a strange mixture of
penetrating sagacity and unphilosophical confusion. The chief energies of thinking Indians should be thrown into the problems of how to disentangle the old faith from its temporary accretions, how to bring religion into line with the spirit of science, how to meet and interpret the claims of temperament and individuality, how to organize the divergent influences on the basis of the ancient faith.\textsuperscript{22}

He did not find anything wrong in absorbing certain aspects from the cultures of other lands. Sufficient care, he said, can be taken to enhance, raise and purify the best elements from the alien traditions, before accommodating them with the best in the ancient tradition. Regarding the right procedures to be adopted in fusing together of the different alien elements into the national fabric, he referred to the life and writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Bhagawan Das. "If Gandhi and Tagore to-day adopt an ethical view of life, it is certainly to be traced to their contact with the Christian West".\textsuperscript{23}

All these Indian leaders absorbed what they considered to be the best elements in the West but remained Indians and Hindus to the core. While they drew their essential inspiration constantly from the Humanist Idealism of our ancient heritage, they also showed a keen appreciation of the Western thought. They never developed abnormal double personalities as a result of their East West combinations, but assimilated them in such a wholesome manner than they could become such great leaders of the world to attract men and women belonging to the nations of East and West that flocked around them. Radhakrishnan was very much in favour of Indian Philosophy becoming more active and dynamic as one of the great formative elements in human progress
by relating the immensely increasing knowledge of modern science and technology to the ancient ideals of Indian Philosophy.

2.2.1.11 Spiritual Experience-Sources of his thought

Radhakrishnan mentions of his spiritual experience which has been the hallmark of his life in shaping his own thought besides many other influences from both East and West. He writes about it as follows:

Although I admire the great masters of thought, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western I cannot say that I am a follower of any, accepting his teaching in its entirety. I do not suggest that I refused to learn from others or that I was not influenced by them. While I was greatly stimulated minds of all those, whom I have studied, my thought does not comply with any fixed traditional pattern. For my thinking had another source and proceeded from my own experience which is not quite the same as what is acquired by mere study and reading. It is born of spiritual experience rather than deduced from logically ascertained premises. Philosophy is produced more by our encounter with reality than by the historical study of such encounters. In my writings, I have tried to communicate my insight into the meaning of life. I am not sure, however, that I have succeeded in converging my inmost ideas. I tried to show that my general position provides a valid interpretation of the world which seems to me to be consistent with itself and to foster the life of spirit.  

Radhakrishnan mentions clearly that the main source from which his thought proceeded was his personal experience and not through an analysis of the study of various philosophical systems. The content of his philosophical thought was the product of his encounter with Reality and was born of the spiritual experience, but not by any logical deductions. From this, it is evident
that Radhakrishnan was an intellectual like Sankara and Sri Aurobindo though he never claimed to be one or gave a description of the nature and character of his spiritual experience in any of his writings.

2.2.2 Philosophical scene in early 20th century west

Ever-since Kant demonstrated that God, human freedom and Immortality cannot be established by reason but can be felt only by the heart, the danger was realised, to human values and to the philosophical systems attempting to reach certainty in philosophy through mathematical method. Pascal and Rousseau felt that faith alone could support the validity of the values of the spirit. Hegel negated the narrow stand point of Kant and established limits to the mathematical ideal which was the dominating method in philosophy till then. Such an attempt of Hegel has enabled philosophy to regain its consciousness from its slumber.

2.2.2.1 Absolute idealism vs pluralism

Hegelianism reached the shores of England about the middle of 19th century. Since then idealism found a firm foothold in the British Universities like Cambridge, Aberdeen and especially in Oxford. Among its advocates were Thomas Hill Green, Jowett, Edward Caird, John Caird, A.S. Pringle Pattison, F.H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet. In the years before 1914, British Idealism seemed as firm as its empire, but the first quarter of 20th century saw the beginnings of its end, when many pluralistic systems such as
Pragmatism, Humanism, Realism, Evolutionism, Personal Idealism etc. rose to protest against Absolute Idealism.

Such a sudden rise of a number of pluralistic systems is the early 20th century as a protect against the monistic character of absolute Idealism was the result of its failure to satisfy the needs of the modern man in the present century due to many serious defects. A number of criticisms were levelled against Absolute Idealism by the pluralistic systems whose representatives include James Ward, Henri Bergson, William James, Bertrand Russell, Rudolf Eucken, F.C.S. Schiller, Harold Howison, A.J. Balfour and Hustings Rashdall. The following are some of the main charges levelled against Absolute Idealism by the pluralistic systems.

2.2.2.1.1

Absolute Idealism denies the reality of the pluralistic world, which is absorbed into the One fundamental Unity. The world and its objects are considered as appearances before the One Reality. The Reality of the Many is annulled and absorbed in the Absolute, reducing the finite minds to its passing thoughts.

As against this, the pluralistic systems strongly advocated the reality and the historicity of the world and its objects. The development of the world is an evolutionary process of creative synthesis and hence it is real but not apparent. It is full of activity and is subjected to continuous change or becoming. The world consists of indefinite variety of psychic existences varying
in different degrees of perfection, all tending towards self-realization. The history of the world is a real creative evolution. There is a steady progress towards greater individuality as well as solidarity in it.

2.2.2.1.2

Absolute Idealism takes on its own 'The High A priori Road'. It is highly intellectual with an abstract and dry Absolute as One Reality. Such as abstract logical concept can give only abstract outline of objects of the world missing their concreteness, their continuity and living conditions.

The idea of creation of the world for the pluralists is just the idea of dependence of the Many on the One. The Many, objects of the world not only exist along with God, buy live in him and through Him. From God, is the world born and by him is it sustained.

2.2.2.1.3

For some pluralists, Philosophy is an expression of a vision and not logic. It is an immediate experience or intuition, belonging to perception, feeling and impulse but not to intellect as in Absolute Idealism.

2.2.2.1.4

In the system of Absolutism, the One Reality alone is free, while the subjects are all the instruments or puppets moved hither and thither, by the
strings of the Absolute. Absolutism is determinism and there is no place for individual freedom. Monism is fatalism and freedom and is illusion.

The world of objects according to the pluralists is not a completed, or determined or designed one but in the process of becoming and depends on man's efforts through gains or losses struggles or novelties for fulfillment. The reality of change synthetic novelty of future etc. demand the reality of freedom and the negation of determinism. God and man are fellow soldiers in the struggles for the fulfillment.

2.2.2.1.5

In Absolutism, distinction between God and the world disappears. God is only an immanent being in the world of plurality and not transcendent to it.

For the pluralists, God is both immanent in the world and also transcendent to it. God is personal as well as ethical and conserves all eternal human values. God is the origination and sustaining ground of the lives of the Many. He is the purposive ground of the evolutionary process and also stands as surety for the conservation of values. God meets the demands of the religious heart, which longs for intimate living intercourse with God. Since God and man are co-members of the series, close religious communion and fellowship with Him is possible.
2.2.2.1.6

Absolutism denies personal immortality. By making the permanent existence of "Many" impossible. Absolutism abolishes all prospects of personal immortality.

Pluralists believe in personal immortality. In the course of evolution, the development of the individual in the world will take place as a continuous process till it is fully complete when the perfected spirits would "behold the undiminished splendor of truth in the light of the countenance of God". It is the kingdom of God with perfect spirits. The final state is the eternal and perfect activity of the individuals. Perfection is not rest but activity. Eternal state is not one of inaction and stagnation.

2.2.2.1.7

Absolutism means death to morality. It grants 'moral holidays', for the evil is not recognized by it. It considers evil as an appearance or illusory.

Moral values find a significant place in pluralism. The conception of God as personal and ethical, conserves all values in Him. God and man are fellow soldiers to banish evil from the world.

2.2.2.2

Though Radhakrishnan made a deep study of pluralism and Absolute Idealism, the two distinct living philosophies which were existing in the
contemporary Western world of his time, he had more sympathy with Absolute Idealism and was inclined to accept it as a more reasonable philosophy affording full moral and intellectual satisfaction, to the spiritual being of man, than pluralism.

He developed a strong conviction which continued to entertain him although his life that Absolute Idealism is the best philosophy in the existing conditions and that it could offer satisfactory solutions to the problems of mankind. This may be partly due to his appreciation of the Absolute Idealism of the west found reflected in the Advaita Vedāntā of Sankara which he studied and admired highly during his student days and subsequently. His admiration of Absolutism was so high that he charged the pluralistic system with a number of defects. These are some of them pointed out by him:

2.2.2.2.1

Radhakrishnan discovered that pluralistic systems arose mainly on account of anti-intellectual bias against Absolute Idealism seeking support for the construction of their systems, in the religious beliefs especially the Christian dogmas, instead of finding them in thought, emotion or will or immediate experience or intuition. To him this was a serious error in the field of philosophy where "philosophy was made religious, instead of religion being made philosophical". It is to point out this defect in the philosophies of the pluralists that Radhakrishnan undertook the painful task of critically examining their works in this second major book, 'Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy'.
Radhakrishnan found democratic tendency in the pluralistic systems. In his view, philosophy as a specialized discipline requiring thought and training, cannot be practiced by any one except the specialists. According to him the pluralists have taken off Philosophy from the forum to the street (common men) in the name of democracy. By making philosophy democratic as in politics, philosophy gets mixed up with religion and knowledge with opinion. In their endeavour to satisfy popular demands and support to prevailing notions, the pluralists expressed this as a democratic tendency in philosophy.

Unable to reconcile the problem of evil with reality and Infinite God, the pluralists characterized God as finite, who struggles hard with man, suffering along with him to overcome evil. This God grows as man grows. Radhakrishnan said that such view may be due to the influence of the Christian Religion which believed in the suffering Christ, who is the God Incarnate. If at all there is a God, said McTaggart, he must be non-omnipotent and non-creative. According to William James, this finite God is yet to become a full-fledged master of the world.

Radhakrishnan could not reconcile himself with the conception of a finite God, who in his view, cannot be lowered to the level of men and finitude, from the high level of Infinity and Creatership. This defect he attributes to the
prevailing notions of the common man for which the pluralists wanted a place in their systems.

2.2.2.2.4

Radhakrishnan recognizes that pluralism is true within limits but it is not final. It is but a step on the way to ultimate Truth. As a thinker he found certain difficulties in the way of accepting pluralistic solutions as final. In his view, the natural outcome of such an intellectual pluralism would be a narrow philistine spirit of individualism, sensualism and selfishness. However, many significant notions of the pluralistic systems were accepted and incorporated into his philosophy later.

Thus Radhakrishnan was immensely benefitted by a thorough evaluation of Absolutism and pluralism charging against one another, since the stand-points of both had a bearing on his sensitive mind. He carried many notions of the pluralistic systems, consciously or unconsciously into his own scheme or thought, which he gradually developed during the subsequent years. He was thus actually rehearsing, to use the term of D.M. Dutta, for his future flights in the construction of a philosophical system of his own.

2.2.2.3 Oxford - intellectuals

Radhakrishnan had the unique privilege of adorning the chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford from 1936-1951 and had the opportunity of meeting several Intellectuals of his time. He was associated with the Oxford University as a Professor for several years and was a member
of the Intellectual circle at Oxford. He came into contact personally with them, and they have influenced him in some measure.

2.2.2.3.1 A.N.Whitehead and W.R.Inge

The theory of Relativity, formulated by Albert Einstein, had considerable influence on Philosophy and number of Physicists in Oxford such as Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Eddingten, who showed keen interest in a kind of Space-time philosophy. Radhakrishnan called them as scientific Metaphysicians. Philosophers of that period like Samuel Alexander and Alfred North Whitehead developed the Philosophy of Emergent Evolution. While Samuel Alexander conceived Reality as Space-Time matrix, as a substitute for the Absolute, Professor Whitehead developed a Philosophy explaining the Evolution of Reality in his book ‘Process and Reality’, which was an essay in Cosmology. Radhakrishnan quoted from the writings of Whitehead, who had sufficient measure of influence on him. One of the Western scholars Charles Hartshorn stated that the Philosophical views of Whitehead had a close resemblance with those of Radhakrishnan.26

Apart from Philosophers, Scientists, Historians and Sociologists, Radhakrishnan also had close association with one of the religious leaders belonging to Protestant Christianity and a reputed Christian theologian, by name Revd.Dr.William Ralph Inge, the Dean of St.Paul. He became a close friend of Dr.W.R.Inge, who wrote many books such as ‘The Philosophy of plotinus’ and ‘Christian Mysticism’ and several others on Mysticism. W.R.Inge influenced Radhakrishnan very much through his protestant religious views,
apart from his liberal attitude in accepting the mystics of the world belonging to different religions as 'kinsmen'. He considered mysticism as the absence of Religion where the mystic attains spiritual intuition of God through his or her immediate experience. In emphasizing on Experience, Inge relegated many of the external objects of worship as of secondary importance. He was also very critical of some of the theoretical issues current at his time. He believed that spiritual intuition is very deep in man and can become a self-evident truth.

Dr. Inge refers to Plotinus, who said that "the witness of the Mystics is wonderfully unanimous". Radhakrishnan quotes this very often in support of his contention that Mystical experience is the highest knowledge of reality available to man. On the basis of this, he argued for the unity and the universality and all religions in the world. Radhakrishnan found staunch support from Dr. Inge on some of his views.

Radhakrishnan acquainted himself with the theological as well as historical origins and development of Christianity from early times upto the modern period. Radhakrishnan came across many trends in philosophy and religion in the West through his wide contacts with distinguished men of learning while in England and they left their indelible marks on his sensitive and subtle mind. There were a number of "Free Thinkers" who were open in criticism on subjects concerning Christian religion. They were highly critical of Christianity. They include, Jehannes Weiss, Alfred Loisy, George Tyrrell, Maurice Blended and Baron Frederick Von Hugel. Radhakrishnan read their writings.
2.2.2.4 Religious situation in early 20th century Europe

The Renaissance in Europe brought about revolutionary changes in almost every field of life and society in the west. The development of Science and Technology proved a boon to the modern man. Natural Science and its methods imposed on the life and thought have changed the general attitudes of the people during these centuries. Modern temper insisted on scientific attitude in all human affairs including politics, economics, history, religion and philosophy.

2.2.2.4.1 Challenge to religion

The scientific inquiry into religions resulted in the declaration of its doctrines as illusions. Religion was regarded as an illusion, by Psychologists (Froid and Leuba). It was considered as a social phenomenon by Sociologists to carry on social organization and conserve secular values. The historians of religion treated it as a record of the conflicts of contradictory systems, each of them claiming absolute truth and dogmatic finality. The findings of the comparative study of religions, revealed that every religion was moulded by fallible and imperfect human instruments. Religious scriptures were subjected to critical inquiry in the same manner as the books in other areas. The "higher criticisms" of the Christian Scripture pointed out that the Bible contained elements of myths, legends and floating tradition and exhibited a proceeds of growth with many levels of development.
The society of this period found a practical inefficiency of theologies in guiding men and matters. Many intellectuals with a scientific temper of mind, questioned the very foundation of religion. Some even doubted its practical value and efficiency. It was found that men were more engaged in war, adventure, success, efficiency in life, to the total neglect of the fundamental religious tenets such as brotherly love, compassion for the poor and the needy etc. The existence of many religions in modern societies brought about division and laid barriers to antagonise the people. Religious piety adopted hostile attitudes towards other religions. People developed a kind of patriotism about religions. Religion also became a 'branch of statecraft'. The first world war was a demonstration for the demands of patriotism as against the feeble claims of religion of peace and love. Many a socialist or revolutionary socialist, considered religion as a stumbling block, for the progress and development of human society. Communism took cudgels against religion to get rid of it once for all. The spirit of science pervaded in every aspect of life in modern Europe demanding the sway of science and social idealism. The moral ineffectiveness of religion and its failure to promote the best of life was considered to be the cause for the then state of affairs. To follow religion was considered old fashion, and to be critical of it become the modern fashion.

2.2.2.4.2 Substitutes for religion

Some of the intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the religious doctrines, its beliefs and practices sought asylum in naturalistic atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, humanism and modernism. There were also others who followed the implicit authority of the orthodox Christian Church consisting
of Catholic and Protestant sects, whether of the Pope or of a council or of the Scripture.

2.2.2.4.3 The hope and the religion we need

While counting the conditions of the early 20th century modern man, Radhakrishnan did not merely look at it negatively but hoped for a better society and better community. He thought that it is possible to overcome this malaise through the inspiration of new horizons, new perspectives and a thirst for new human relations for a world community. In his view the present pain is only a travail to give birth to a world soul which is the need of the hour.

Radhakrishnan hopes that through discord and confusion progress arises and man can change the direction of his marches with the assistance of creative minds. According to him we need the prophet souls who have insight and vision to help our wandering generation to fashion a goal by seeing the present with a foresight of the future.

A vital religion and a live philosophy are the need of the hour to reconstruct the bases of conviction and devise a scheme of life. A remarkable unity of spirit can be traced only in the mystic traditions of different religions. Mystics, said Radhakrishnan, are spiritual kinsman despite their different religious affiliations. Therefore, Radhakrishnan recommends, Religion of the spirit as the Religion of the future since it avoids dogmatic affirmation and dogmatic denial.
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