

From the Bhavan's President  
**Dr S. Radhakrishnan**  
**A Friend,**  
**Philosopher and**  
**Guide**

R. Venkataraman



Whenever and wherever he spoke, whether the audience comprised his students, Heads of State and Government, legislators and diplomats or simple men and women, Dr. Radhakrishnan was heard with the respect that is due to an Ideal Teacher, a *Guru*

**T**eachers' Day, (September 5) as you are all aware, is observed on the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. On this auspicious day, we pay our grateful tribute to that teacher among teachers.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan taught in several classrooms in Madras, Mysore, Waltair, Calcutta, Benares and Oxford.

But beyond the walls of the educational institutions with which he was associated, Dr Radhakrishnan became a one man Book University to which students from all over the world gained admission. His academic lectures were published as books, of which the *Hindu View of Life and Idealist View of Life* received instant and international acclaim.

Whenever and wherever he spoke, whether the audience comprised his students, Heads of State and Government, legislators and diplomats or simple men and women, Dr. Radhakrishnan was heard with the respect that is due to a Teacher, a *Guru*

Why, we may ask, was Radhakrishnan heard with such respect and attention? It was not just because he was learned, it was not just because he was eloquent. It was because his readers and listeners knew that Radhakrishnan conveyed his thoughts with the intention of lifting each one of us to a higher purpose.



inauguration of the Chennai Kendra: (L to R) Sri T. V. Viswanathan Iyer, Vice-Chairman, Madras Kendra, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Mysore, Maharaja Jayachanaraja Wadiyar, then Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Radhakrishnan.

This is the crux of teaching. Teachers are not merely purveyors of knowledge from one mind to another. A book, the radio or the television can do the same quickly, efficiently. A teacher imparts not just information and knowledge; not just skills and techniques but values, principles and norms which govern human conduct. No mechanical instrument, howsoever sophisticated, can perform this role of the teacher. That is why education at the hands of a teacher has been regarded in Indian thought as a second birth: *Tad dvitiyam janmam*.

A teacher has to light a spark which will kindle in the individual

a higher outlook on life and evolve into a new kind of being. A teacher must therefore be a facilitator, friend, philosopher and guide.

If you ask any individual to look back to his student days and think of teachers who may

have influenced him decisively, one will certainly be able to think of one or two outstanding people, who, by the sharpness of their minds and the nobility of their characters, possessed what is called: fibre. They may have been strict, sometimes even hard; they may never have achieved fame or renown but

they were individuals who, regardless of reward or recognition, dedicated themselves to the cause of education. They inspired us to rise above ourselves and become human beings of whom families, school and society could be proud. It is because of this that we ennoble teachers and equate them to Gods themselves.

*Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu,  
Gurur Devo Maheswarah.*

In the context of the new social order, the teacher is expected to have a vision of our emerging society and its demands. While there are many attributes which we would like India to possess and while we have many dreams and ideals for our future,



From Left to Right: Mrs. Serrano, Seron Julior Essemmer, Dr. Radhakrishnan, H. E. Senor Miguel Serrano, Ambassador of Chile

there is one ideal which we must cherish above all others. And that is the ideal of national unity.

I would like all teachers to regard themselves as integrationists first and educationists only next; persons who *weld* our collective thoughts together. I am sure all teachers, whether they teach history, geography or science would like to inculcate in their students a sense of pride in their own cultural heritage.

As you are all aware, the same epics, legends and ballads have moulded our conscience in India. We celebrate the same festivals and have been the product of the same religious and philosophical inspirations, both ancient and modern. Gautama Buddha and

Mahatma Gandhi touch a cord in all of us right from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Kathiawar to Kamrup.

I would like every teacher to ensure that, while teaching, he or she strengthens innate respect which their students have towards the fabric of Indian unity. They must ensure that the precious and pure minds of our children never get vitiated by feelings of hatred or ill will. Prejudices based on caste, creed and language must never be allowed to find root in the minds of our children.

If we were to ask a child in the Britain which he thought was the greatest country in the world he would unhesitatingly say it is the Britain. Similarly a child in the US will say that his country is the question, in all probability he would greatest in the world.

But if we were to ask an Indian child the same say that



Dr. Radhakrishnan (centre) with Rajaji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

America or England is the greatest country! I do not want teachers to instil in their students any sense of narrow chauvinism but a sense of pride in their being

Indian and in their ancient culture. To my mind, being an ideal Indian is to follow the examples of those two great teachers: Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Dr. Zakir Husain.

Essentially, education must seek to discover latent talents and skills among pupils. Teachers should be able to identify and encourage aptitudes by fostering a spirit of enquiry among students, into the why and wherefore of things. Mere learning by rote can never lead to abiding knowledge. Not quantity alone but the quality of absorption must be borne in mind. Only then can information mature into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom.