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Remembering Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: The man behind Teacher's Day in India



"Teachers should be the best minds in the country,"

"Teachers should be the best minds in the country," believed the teacher, philosopher, statesman, India's first Vice-President and second President, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. We have been

celebrating his birthday, September 5, as Teacher's Day across the nation since 1962.

The humble suggestion came from Dr Radhakrishnan himself at a time when he was the president of the country. "Instead of celebrating my birthday, it would be my proud privilege if 5 September is observed as Teachers' Day," he asked his students and friends, who were seeking permission to celebrate his birthday. Thus, since 1962, his birthday is celebrated as 'Teacher's Day' in India. He was one of the most learned scholars and statesmen.



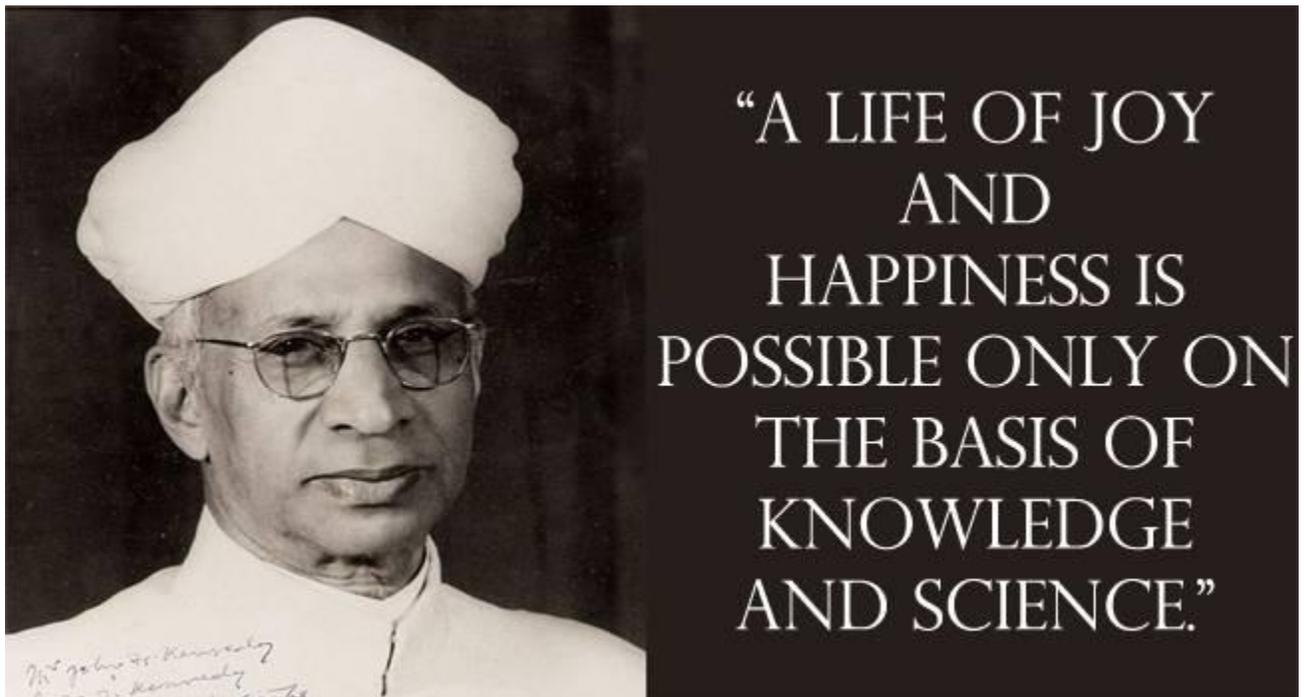
Dr Radhakrishnan's journey from a small village at the border of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, to the President of India, is quiet an interesting one. After pursuing an MA in Philosophy in 1908, the charismatic leader was appointed as a faculty member by the Department of Philosophy at Madras Presidency College.

Radhakrishnan's only aim was to impart students with the best education. He was such a great teacher that his students loved and respected him immensely.

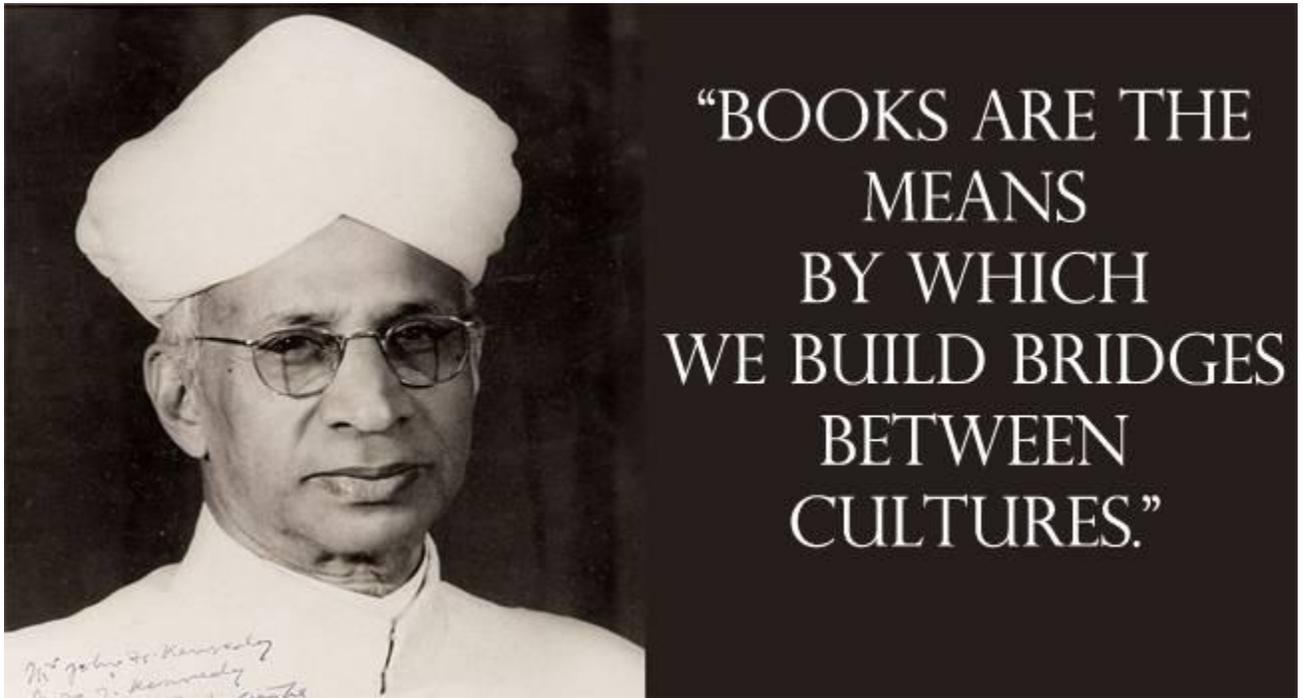
Radhakrishnan taught in the University of Calcutta, the University of Oxford, and the University of Mysore. He is credited for creating and shaping the contemporary Hindu identity and for connecting India to the West with his philosophies.

We bring to you some facts about Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan that you must know:

- Dr. Radhakrishnan placed Indian philosophy on the world map. He illustrated how western philosophers were prejudiced towards theological influences from their wider culture. He also claimed that Indian philosophy merits the term 'philosophy' in the western world

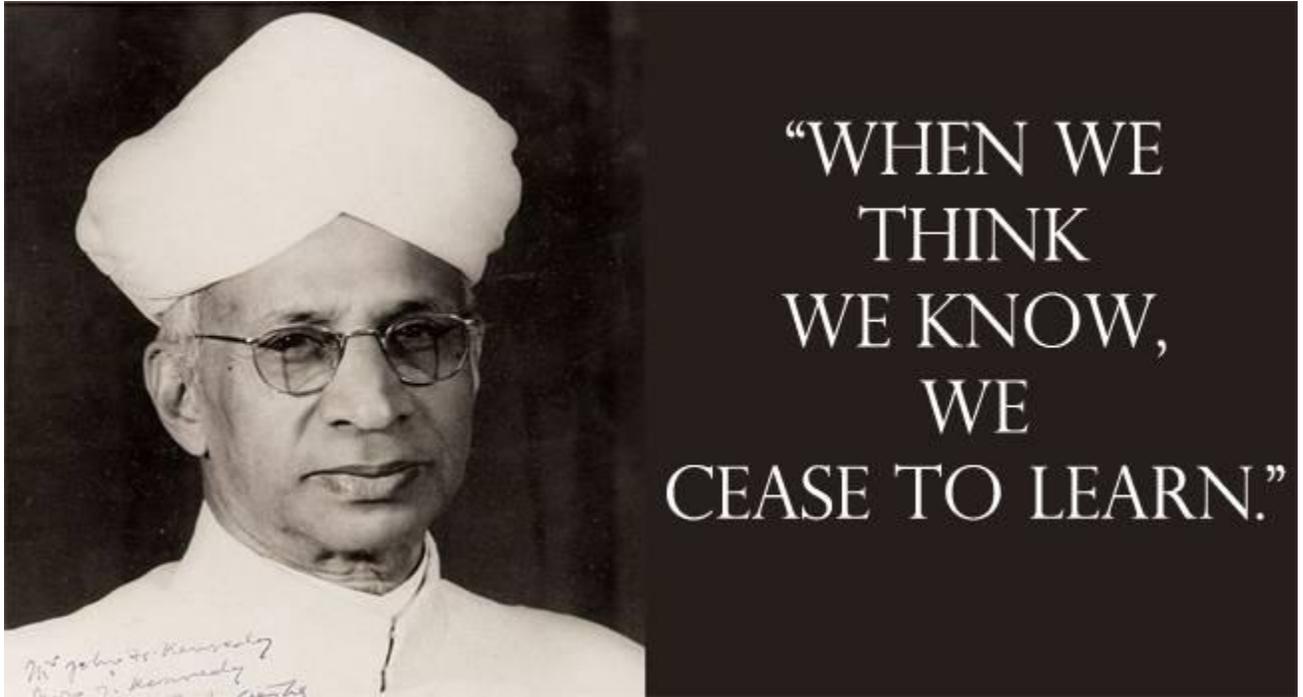


- He was immensely popular among his students. When he was appointed as a professor in the University of Calcutta and was leaving Mysore University, his students arranged and drove him in a flower-decked carriage from the university to the railway station

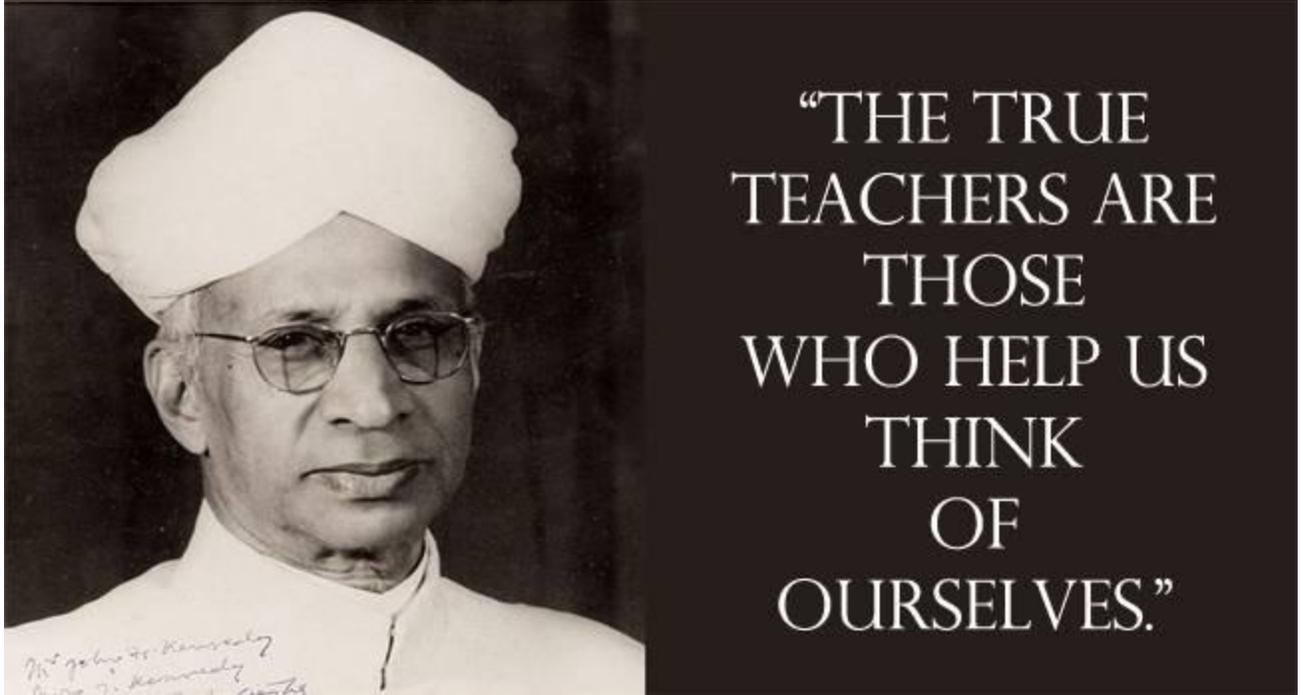


- He was married to a distant cousin at the age of 16. He was married for 51 years, until his wife, Sivakamu died in 1956
- He wrote his first book about the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore. He believed that Tagore's philosophy was the true manifestation of Indian spirit
- During the course of his academic career, he received many awards. He was appointed a Knight Bachelor in 1931, was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 1938 and was awarded the prestigious Bharat Ratna in 1954. He also

received the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 1961



- He won the Templeton Prize in 1975, for promoting the notion of "a universal reality of God that embraced love and wisdom for all people". He donated all the award money to Oxford University
- Oxford University, in the memory of the loving teacher of India, set up a scholarship by his name, known as "Radhakrishnan Chevening Scholarships"
- In 1939, Radhakrishnan served as the Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University



- After independence, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan represented India at the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and later, he also served as the Ambassador of India to the Soviet Union
- Former Indian cricketer VVS Laxman is the great grandnephew of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

Inderpal Aulakh