

## HINDU VIEW OF LIFE: AN OVERVIEW

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**Abstract**

*Hinduism may be described as an ideology which is followed by 'Hindus' who basically are the people who settled along the Sindhu river for almost 5000 years ago. Hindu religion or 'dharma', means way of living, derive its fundamentals from the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and Shashtras which were written by the Rishies, means highly qualified people of that era. The basic principles of Hinduism are tolerance and 'vasudhaivakutumbakam' means "the world is one family." Dr. Radha Krishnan was highly influenced by Hinduism and conveyed its ideologies all around the globe. In this paper I tried to put forward the views expressed by Dr. Radha Krishnan in his book The Hindu View of Life.*

**Keywords:***Hinduism, Hindu, Dharma, ideology etc.*

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## Introduction

Dr. Radha Krishnan was a renowned scholar, eminent thinker, and an extraordinary statesman of India, who was deeply influenced by the Western thought and culture to the extent that he interpreted the complex and elusive concept of Hinduism and its paradoxical and multi-dimensional ancillaries like: Epics, Puranas, Tantras, and Darshana in the most effective and authoritarian manner to the west through lectures, which he delivered at the University of Oxford in 1926. "Hinduism," Radhakrishnan affirms, "accepts all religious notions as facts and arranges them in the order of their more or less intrinsic significance"<sup>1</sup> and Hinduism is neither a communal philosophy nor a sectarian creed, rather it is a multi-faceted and all-compassing broad-spectrum of life which has been absorbing and assimilating, diverse and divergent, culture and socio-religious philosophies of the world at large, for the past more than five thousand years. Prof. H.N. Muirhead said, "Dr. Radhakrishnan has the rare qualification of being equally versed in the great European and the not less great Asiatic tradition which may be said to hold in solution between them the spiritual wisdom of the world, and of thus speaking as a philosophical bi linguist upon it."<sup>2</sup>

The term Hindu has been derived from the river-Sindhu, to the east of which the Aryans have settled, but the range, role, and relevance of Hinduism have been flexibly vast enough, due to its conceptual catholicism and universal applicability. Radhakrishnan believed that "the Vedas are the records of the experiences of the sages who were the 'pioneer researchers' in the realm of the spirit."<sup>3</sup> The secret of continuity longevity of Indian culture and civilization is its all-inclusive nature, where religion primarily is a matter of realization in rapport with the experiences of Reality of selfless pursuit of Truth by the great seers and Rishies. While discussing the nature and content of reality in terms of religious experience, R. Krishnan emphasized the importance of Purushartha and the various Ashrams, the varnas or categorization of caste in which sects like Jainism, Buddhism, Bhakti-movement, Brahma Samaj, and Arya Samaj, have contributed vitally to the concept of Vedanta, which made Hinduism a universal philosophy of tolerance, perseverance, prosperity, and peace. According to Radhakrishnan, the Hindu View of Life is solely dependent on the concept of Ultimate, which includes the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva with the mind and face of a stern father fused into the heart and feeling of a compassionate mother. This philosophical treatise consists of the three parts, comprising the Religious experience, conflicts of Religion, and Hindu Dharma, where the case of Hindu thought and Hindu View of Life is expressed in a vast scholarly idiom. The ultimate truth that

Hinduism aspires for is not the offshoot of intellectual analysis or emotional outbursts, rather it is a matter of Faith; which is not a scientific expiation of the institution of Rishies and other perfect souls, which is in the form of guidance enriched in the Epics, Puranas, Tantras, and Darshana which in turn are nothing but the perception of Truth from different angles. Vedanta with triple canon of Upanishads, the Brahmasutra, and Bhagavad Gita is the central thrust of Hinduism, which embodies mystic experiences, their logical interpretation, and the discipline of realizing vedic truth in life. In *The Hindu View of Life* R. Krishnan states that:

“The Vedanta is not ‘a’ religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance.”<sup>4</sup>

Since god is worshiped as the divine mother, so it is manifested in leaves, flowers, and fruits the world over only its ways of realization and its stages of evolution are different, which makes Hinduism an elastic joint-family, Aryans, Hunas and Kiratas are assimilated without the loss of individuality. Plans are full of examples showing that how the non-Aryans God got transformed into Aryan deities, e.g. Krishna get acknowledged as Indra, leader of the Vedic cult, and Shiva, a Dravidian God is recognized as superior to Aryana Paksha.

While some critics describe Hinduism as ‘magic tempered by metaphysics’ and animism transformed by the philosophy’ they pay a tribute to it as Sanatana Dharma which is a missionary religion, where other followers are not considered as heathen and neither the force nor the coercion is used for conversion, as shown by Ashokan edicts preaching tolerance and affection.

Hinduism has classified for Ashrams and Purusharthas, during the evolution of man which begin with Brahmacharya leading to Grihastha and then vanaprastha, finally terminating into the Sanyasa, when man becomes the citizen of the world followed by the three kinds of Purushartha like Artha, which means material influence, Dharma which stands for healthy desire, followed by Moksha which is a kind of liberation. Radhakrishnan suggests that ‘all human beings can have access, unmediated by their cultural backgrounds, to the liberating experience of Advaita.’<sup>5</sup> In Hinduism, the concept of Maya is not an illusion, rather it is a relative reality, where it partakes of the supreme as a music of flute can not be ignored just because we can not see it. According to Sankara, all individuals are liberated in sarvamukha and the world must merge into the stillness of Absolute of ‘Absolute’, which is in accordance with Einstein’s theory of Relativity, which considers system of time and space as limited measurable. So the world of Maya is but the imperfect reading of perfect. Moreover, the Code of Manu has underlined eight types of marriages like

Gandharva, Rakshasa, Arura, etc. followed by his four varnas which are a sociological division of the society into Brahmin, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudra which in turn are based on the division of labor for peaceful co-existence of society. That is why Hinduism is not a sectarian creed with postulated values, rather it is challenging and inspiring vibrant force full of eternal values and varied approaches to one single goal. It is a divine edifice of many mansions with a laboratory with full facilities for spiritual and forceful spectrum of spiritual democracy, where all are assimilated into a unity of diversity, as contained in Rigveda reality is one despite diverse angles and approaches; “ekam sat viprabahudhavadanti”

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