

## To the Confused Indian

The words **Hindu**, **Hindustani**, **Hinduism** and now **Hindutva** are compelling and at the same time confusing to the average Indian leading to a haze in understanding.

### Hindu & Hinduism

Most of us know how the term **Hindu** came into existence and no detailed elaborations are needed. Early on, people of this territory were referred to as Indu or Indos and later on Hindu to signify a geo ethnic term for all denizens residing around the Indus River and beyond.

But with the arrival and presence of Semitic religions, Zoroastrians, Jainism, Buddhism and all other new offshoots like Sikhism etc, the people of Hindustan who did not belong to these religions came to be referred as Hindus and their practices and value systems as **Hinduism**.

So the name Hindu has two dimensions. From a geo ethnic perspective all denizens of Pakistan, Hindustan and Bangladesh, Nepal are referred as Hindus since antiquity. We all share the same ancient history of *Sanatana Dharma* with common or similar genealogies.

From a non-geo ethnic point of view the word 'Hindu' has an exclusively religious significance. The term Hinduism which is now considered a religion has come to mean the practice of Sanatana Dharma in exclusion to following any other mandates of other religions. Sananta Dharma is a compendium of social-individual codes and a collection of Vedic - Tantra literature / scriptures. It is considered as a pluralistic religion and not a polytheistic religion which means we believe God is one, but can be approached in numerous ways and worshipped in various forms. Hindus also pray to intermediaries like evolved or spiritually realized personalities. The different and variety of forms represents some ideal or power with a viable history to it and some of the forms like Shiva-Ling are symbolic.

Many complain "oh Hinduism is very confusing and they have too many Gods". But look at the commonality and how people from various states connect with each other as Hindus. It is simply a marvelous example of "unity in diversity".

### So what essentially are the thought currents of a Hindu & Hinduism?

Hinduism can be best defined as being "Airy to being of Ether" phenomenon due to its incorporating, accommodating, permeating philosophy. As per its inherent nature it is free flowing, expansive, non binding, non commanding and its quintessence is that of freedom of expression and choice, coupled with an enormous varieties of scientific- spiritual approaches to salvation and a gigantic collection of symbols of devotion. The range of thoughts commence

from the worship of such symbols – idols – objects of divine nuance to the highest and escalating to the most subtle and abstract thoughts of mysticism. It comprises devotional practices ranging from objective worship to subjective ideation of God. Its base is airy and its culmination is ethereal, that remains enshrined in the realizations of the saints.

Every Hindu enjoys utmost freedom to choose any spiritual path suited to his understanding and feelings. The sky of Sanatana Dharma is open to all religions and all cults to live in peace as children of one God. Intellectual Hindus have a tradition of welcoming debates of an impersonal nature in trying to ascertain the truth of every subject matter thereby achieving their convictions by way of reasoning. The quintessence of every Hindu lies in its utter freedom to question, query, debate and arrive at conclusions and then adopt life values and to live by it. Hindus are people of learning and not so much as people of dogma and imposed belief systems.

This freedom, to think and evaluate the various philosophies, spiritual paths without any coercion or fear is the most cherished aspect of Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma. To protect this freedom becomes then the priority and obligation of every Hindu.

One should contemplate on the fact that religions are meant to spread religiosity and love of God by loving humanity and not abusing humanity. The varieties of religions that are extant are not meant for ridiculing each other or creating rivalries. Religions are not meant to create hatred and warfare or for encroaching upon others' right to freedom of expression or impose their beliefs systems on others by any means. Religions are not meant to make its platforms a boxing ring where each one is trying to throw punches at each other and proclaiming each other's religion is supreme.

We all know about God from the qualities given to Him in our scriptures and our belief systems. But honestly how many really know Him? To act like self appointed -commercial brokers (*Dalal*) for God is quite paradoxical.

The only time Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism acquires a particular shape, is when it feels threatened from other religions that obstruct or malign its nature. This shape or structure could be compared to a force of wind, a typhoon or a tornado that moves only to oppose such destructive forces. But its essence is benign and universal in nature and humanitarian in nature. Therefore, it can never be a threat to those, whose intentions are altruistic and amenable. Its universal philosophy of brotherhood irrespective of caste, color or creed remains unparalleled.

But sad to say, the implementation of cardinal virtues in the human psyche remains sidelined as segments of conflicting communities engage in commercialization and politicization of religious ideals in different degrees. As a result - corruption, crime and exploitation become tenacious.

Hindus and Hinduism in this century is being in a way revived under a new movement called Hindutva which one may safely conclude is to motivate the Renaissance of Hinduism.

## **Hindutva**

It is essentially an ideology, a corresponding movement, to create unity amongst splintered, diverse Hindus to come together and revive the ailing national spirit with its substrata of universal Hindu consciousness to its optimum best. The purpose is primarily political for the purpose of changing redundant laws and statutes in the constitution at relative ease. India is essentially and in reality, a Hindu nation garnered with Hindu sentiments, but cloaked with a veil of secularism. Sooner the Indians recognize and accept wholeheartedly this veiled fact, better will be the harmony amongst communities. The so-called Hindu consciousness has been evolving since antiquity, sometimes in its high and at times in its lows especially during foreign rule abreast with religious suppression.

Besides its political agenda, there seems to be a silent urge and an echo to protect Hinduism from the militant approach of some segments of non-Hindu religions. It is movement that functions as a defensive mechanism against the dilution of Hindu thought and consciousness. However, an additional factor that could be induced in Hindutva ideology is to add vigorously the spiritual quotient for the emancipation of Hindus. Above all, Hindutva should propagate compliance with the principles of Ahimsa, the mother of all values to be practised under the banner of Hindutva and truly live by the slogan of "*Sabka saath, sabka vikas*" (Collective Efforts, Inclusive Growth).

## **Hindustan and Hindustani**

Hindustan is synonymous with Bharat and or India. Hindustan basically means the place of Hindus. It is said that thousands of years ago when the Aryans invaded this land for the purpose of domicile, they called this land 'Bharat Varsh.' Bhara means that which feeds, Ta means that which gives and Varsh = vast stretch of land.

Subsequently to invasions by Persians and Greeks, Bharat came to be called Hindustan by the Arabs and the people of the Middle East. During the Islamic reign of India, it came to be **commonly** called Hindustan until the conquest by the British, the name of our land was officially changed to India.

In the interest of India or Hindustan it would be most imperative for all people irrespective of their religion or caste, to come hand in hand with communal amity and create common sentiments instead of anti sentiments against each other so that all Indians can focus on "Make India". A responsible and pragmatic approach by all communities can then: "Make in India", "Come in India" and prosper in India and Live in India.

## **Hindutva in its Essence**

***T'is a movement benign,***

*An altruistic and a holistic Aim  
Quintessence of Dharma to reclaim*

***T'is a process***

*For Hindus to be cleansed of stain  
For all communities to live without pain*

*Hindutva & Secularism to be synonymous  
Wherein none may remain anonymous*

***T'is a Clarion Call,***

*For Hindus, all Indians to unite, stand Tall  
Reminiscence of History, never to crumble & fall*

***T'is a Crusade***

*To regain the subtlety of Hindu culture  
Once repressed and now to eternally nurture*

***T'is a profound Intention***

*For all denizens of India to rise & harmonize  
**Opposing all who divide & demonize***

***T'is the sound of the conch***

*Caressing all to awake, rise and unite  
A pilgrimage from finite to the infinite*

*The feelings are lovingly clear  
Serenading all to unite without any fear*

***For we have never been apart and always near -***