

Nasadiya Sukta of Rigveda by Dr. Sachidananda Shastri
Saturday, Sep 27, 2014 in Gold Room at ISU

Quick Introductory Remarks by Shashi K Gadia

- Thanks to Hindu Yuva for facilitating this talk.
- Thanks also to Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of Iowa for their sponsorship.
- Thanks to India Cultural Association for publicity.
- Thanks to Memorial Union at ISU.

Dhärmic systems

Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism are dhärmic systems based on principles.

- These dhärmic systems have a lot in common, e.g., Karma and Reincarnation.
- Dhärmic systems also have profound philosophical differences.
- For example, Buddhism and Jainism do not recognize the Godhead ...
... and in Hinduism an individual forms his / her personal view of God
- Dhärmic systems do not resort to violence based upon differences.

Hinduism and its literature

- The principles of Hinduism are not rooted in history or proposed by prophets ...
... it is claimed that they can be rediscovered by anyone
- The literature in Hinduism is vast
- It consists of Vedäs, Upanishads, Puräns, and Itihäs.
- These parts differ from each other significantly in style ...
... but they are all considered rooted in Vedas
- Itihäs consist of Rämäyaña and Mahäbhärata and they are not history in usual sense
- Vedäs quintessentially define Hinduism

Oral vs. written traditions

- Vedäs have followed an oral tradition.
- Contrary to common perception – oral tradition has been far more authentic than the written tradition where every copy of a book was handwritten and susceptible to changes – especially before the advent of modern press.
- The composers of Vedäs were very particular that not even a single syllable should ever be altered – even in the way it is pronounced.
- In my opinion, Rigveda is at least 7,000 years old; it was canonized some 5,000 years ago.
- To the best of my knowledge Rigveda is believed to be the oldest book of humanity.

The Nasadiya Sukta

- Nasadiya Sukta (Rigveda 10.129.1-7) is a Hymn about Cosmogony that describes the state of universe on the eve and during its creation.
- This profound and mysterious sukta is a *competing* account to the big bang theory and has drawn far more attention *after* the revolution in physics and astronomy in the last century.
- The sukta is an excellent case in a point why no word should ever be changed in Vedās and a testimony to the success of oral tradition. Thanks to the uncompromising attention for perfection in Sanskrit, that any random gathering of reciters would deliver Vedās it in perfect harmony – to the last word and sound – unchanged in time spanning thousands of years.

The speaker

- The proposal for this talk came from the Geetā group in Ames, more specifically from Mrs. Pramoda Nariboli.
- Our speaker for today, Dr. Shastri, is a physician by training – now retired – and devotes more time on study of ancient literature.
- It is my first time that I am hearing a lecture on Rigveda ...
... This may be surprising but perhaps true of almost all audience present here



Hindu YUVAISHU