

5. Imaginative journeys: Connecting God....Einstein and Shankardeva

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About the Book:

- Title of the Book: **God Einstein and Shankardeva**
- Author: **Shri. Surendra Nath Bora**

About the Author:

- Shri. Surendra Nath Bora is a film producer and award winning writer. He has keen interest in Religion, Spirituality and Metaphysics. He is also Chairman of the Sankardev Mission, Kamrup (M) Guwahati-781005 (Assam) Mobile: 9435100316, E-Mail: shankardevmission@gmail.com

The Review:

While some of us grow up with the belief in inescapable conflict of religion and science there is evidence in both ancient Greece and India where the division between scientific and humanistic culture was not maintained. There were those who accepted a principle of orderliness in all possible domains of experience from cosmology to music and mathematics in The Pythagorean spirit and in acceptance of 'rta'. In India mathematical theories have been written in verse and after the term for the poet kavi is used as a synonym for the Philosopher Darshanik. Brilliant contemporary scholars like Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Prof. G.C. Pandey, Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narliker, Prof. A. Rahman, Prof. Projit Basu and others have in the past two and half decades specially highlighted the point that Philosophy, science, technology and culture are in-fact an interwoven fabric of human civilization and their speciation, differentiation or compartmentalization is mainly due to theoretical need for

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specialization. It is interesting that a response of awe and wonder at the beauty and charming complexity of the universe is not uncommon among scientists who see religious implications in the intelligibility of the world. As religion seeks meaning and purpose in the interpretation of our being in the world, science helps us to find regularities.

In India, an ambitious project of History of India, Science, Philosophy and culture was instilled in 1996 and, in 1995 an ambitious programme of Dialogue in science ethics and religion was established within the most prominent organization of American Scientists, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). It is interesting that average number of books published annually in the United States and listed under the Library of Congress heading "Religion and Science" tripled from the 1950's to the 1990's. It is interesting to note that many Scientist see their quest as a spiritual quest and several physicists see religious implications in the fine tuning of the parameters of the] early universe. Some scientists combine practices of Zen Buddhism with Judaism. Scientists like Francisco Ayala, Avro penrias, Pauline Rudd, Mehdi Galshami, Kenneth Kendler, Charles Townes in their interviews published in 2001 under the title '*Faith and Science by Routledge*' wonderfully escaped their instinct of how they see their insight of how they see their scientific and spiritual quest as continuous.

Mr. Surendra Nath Bora has made an attempt to bring to the larger audience a translation of Shri. Sankardeva's original III canto of Assamese '*Madhagvata*' with a forward where he connects his own reading of religion, philosophy and science together. The work is an article of faith where the author has selectively and imaginatively reconstructed the histories of philosophy and science to build a case for his own interpretation.

The translation of the work Sankardev for the English reading people is useful where the Bamanpurana and the Bhagwat epic have been put together.

The book has carefully put the original verses of the text in Roman together with his own translation and rates. There are also beautiful illustrations where the author and translator tries to show scientific parallels for example it is stated that the measure of the serpent hood mentioned as 38.88 Cr. Km is comparable with Higgs field. Further 24 theories of gross elements that created the universe, the mind maps, creation of under-earths, classical zodiac systems, limits of the union of universal dissolution and many other imaginative metaphysical accounts are shown to have scientific parallels in geophysics, astrophysics and cosmology.

The author/translator Shri. Surendra Nath Bora has earlier translated Bhagwat in the context of social science with reference to international scientific socialism and European

Renaissance. It is interesting that he decides to translate the idea of '*Jagannath Adi Mul*' as active Zero Lord Krishna who created the Earth Brahma and other Gods.

Indians are credited with the discovery of zero while the creeps thought it would be a contradiction to introduce it as something which was nothing. Brohmagupta in 628 A.D. decided to define zero and from then we have an elegant mathematical system.

However some recent scholars like Kuruvilla Pandikattu in the science religion dialogue call attention to some key features of absolute zero. Absolute zero is the oldest possible temperature where particles are at absolute rest but this is unattainable.

The Heisenberg uncertainty principle asserts that even at minimum temperature there will be residual kinetic energy. The third law of Thermodynamics also shows the limits.

Pandikattu says that what can be said of heat can also perhaps be said for the heart – the realm of love and relationship. Zero is the realm of infinity, fullness and unattainably.

Surendra Nath Bora's work is a work of a well meaning enthusiast who tries to see commonalities in the cross cultural, cross disciplinary efforts of mankind to explain reality and find meaning. The reading of history of science and philosophy however leaves much to be desired. It is well to look at Spinoza and Einstein together for comparison but to put two men who were centuries apart as friends is factually incorrect. Many references to theories attributed to scholars also require proper referencing.

The major question to be addressed however is- the scientific method and the imaginative speculative method and the intuitive declaration fall in the same category with reference to what philosophers call valid knowledge? We may all hit at truth by chance but will we be said to be in possession of knowledge if our evidential position is different. There are certainly remarkable parallels between ancient accounts of cosmology and modern science but it would perhaps be hasty to say that the ancestors were in possession of the same knowledge.

The work can be seen as an interesting contribution to imaginative cultural studies where traditional indigenous works are made available to the modern reader to see and examine what use she can make of these poetic, metaphoric texts for our present purpose.

Reviewers Rating:



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