The Evolution of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism

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One of the most unique books on Hinduism that took twenty-five years in the making with contributions from well over 1000 esteemed scholars from across the world is the Encyclopedia of Hinduism with 11 volumes and approximately 7000 entries. It formally saw the light of the day at a glittering event at Manav Seva Mandir (MSM) in Bensenville, Ill. on July 27. The Encyclopedia was conceived, inspired and blessed by Swami Chidanand Saraswati and was published by India Heritage Research Foundation. Swamiji and his disciple Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati spoke about the book to Desi Talk at an exclusive interview on August 19 in New York City.

The idea of having such an encyclopedia emerged in the 1970s, Sarwati Saraswati said after Indian parents living in the U.S. were faced with questions from their children about the various beliefs and symbolism associated with Hinduism. Swamiji came up with the idea of creating an authentic reference book where answers to questions relating to Hinduism could be found.

It took close to 20 years to identify the appropriate qualified scholars who could write on topics encompassing the width and breadth of the culture and religion. “We were aware of the uniqueness of the Hindu religion in the fact that it is different from other religions since it can be identified with the culture and tradition of India. It is intertwined with Indian culture in every aspect,” said Sadhvi. “We took pains to ensure that each article was written as the original translation from the scriptures to avoid any personal biases or imperfections,” she added noting that every aspect of Indian life has flavors of Hindu philosophy, science and culture intertwined with it.

The publication will be available on Amazon.com and other renowned bookstores as well as in most libraries across the country. Proceeds from the book sale will be used to fund the Ganga and Yamuna River Project as well as conservation of other rivers of India.