

Truths and facts behind the Myth: A Critical Analysis on Ashwin Sanghi's *The Krishna*

Key

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ABSTRACT:

The present paper is an attempt to bring out the truths and facts behind the myth in the novel *The Krishna Key* by Ashwin Sanghi. Ashwin Sanghi, an Indian writer whose writings mainly focuses on the thriller genre. All his books and writings are based on mythological and theological themes. One of the India's best selling conspiracy fictional writers and is regarded as an author of the new era of retelling Indian history or mythology in a contemporary context. His writing style was something very peculiar and unique with the usage of words, symbols and images.

KEY WORDS: History, Myth, Facts and Discoveries.

“Within infinite myth lies an eternal truth. Who sees it all? Varuna has built a thousand eyes India, a hundred you and I, only two”.

- Devdutt Pattanaik

As C. S. Lewis says a myth is a lie that reveals a truth which is found in this novel by Ashwin. A combination of myth, fact, history and discovery. A more contemporary definition for mythology is subjective truth communicated through stories, symbols and rituals. Indian Mythologies include Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism which believes in rebirth. Concept such as sacredness and holiness cannot be measured and so exist outside the realm of science. From a scientific lens, all religions are based on myths. God, heaven, hell, rebirth and soul are all mythical ideas. Scientific truths are based on facts and religious truth is based on faith. Efforts have been made by the archaeologists and historians to prove that the places, characters, objects and symbols mentioned in the myths really exist.

The Krishna Key is a fiction through which Ashwin Sanghi takes initiative to explore the truth hidden behind the epic Mahabharata. His main intention is to bring realization to modern generation of India about the efficient past. The Mahabharata is considered to be the world's greatest epic and one of the stories ever told with many plots and subplots. Thus, it is privileged with the title "the longest poem ever written". Thus, according to the traditional belief and the text Mahabharata, it clearly states that Vyasa is the author.

The core Mahabharata story is about the struggle for the throne of Hastinapur. It is set in the kingdom of Hastinapur on the northern plains of India along the Ganges. The conflict began with the struggle of the rightful heir but the blind prince Dhritarashtra and his younger brother Pandu. After Pandu's death, his five sons Pandavas moved into the royal court and lived with their hundred Kaurava cousins, the sons of Dhritarashtra.

The Mahabharata is traditionally interpreted on three distinct levels, to attain the in-depth knowledge of the epic. First, on the external level, it is just a story of a particular royal family that gets involved in a fratricidal war. It further elucidates the qualities of the heroes and their

level of courage and saintliness. Next on the ethical level, the war is seen as the conflict in the daily life between good and evil, justice and injustice. Finally, on the spiritual level, Mahabharata is a battle between the higher and the lower self, the human's spiritual, body, mind and senses. It covers a wide or varied range of topics as astrology, geography, mathematics, complex military formation and strategy, psychology, philosophy, sociology, politics, spirituality etc.

Thus, the epic Mahabharata as a whole text is just considered to be mythical but not historical. Myth is defined to be traditional colourful stories concerning about the origins of the humans and cosmos. The very basic reason why Mahabharata is considered to be a myth is the lack of evidences as recorded as history. The history of India was recorded as history only from the period of Chandragupta Maurya around 301 BCE by the Greek Ambassador Megasthenes, the Father of Indian History. The epic Mahabharata is a part of the Smriti tradition. They were usually recited, heard, memorized and passed down through traditions. The original story of Mahabharata was bounded with more tales of imagination by different authors within India and outside. As years passed by the story of Mahabharata was written and rewritten many times. This made Mahabharata to be considered as a mythical epic. And thus the epic's historical value was failed to be analyzed by the modern generation.

Sanghi while trying to prove the historicity of the Mahabharata he compares it with Galileo's theory of sun being at the centre of the solar system in 1610. As in 1610, there were no evidences to prove that sun was at the centre of the solar system. After few hundred years the theory is accepted with new evidences. Sanghi mentions that "Lack of evidences does not imply lack of existence... In the search of a historical Krishna, we are exactly where Galileo was in 1610- on the brink of a major discovery that the rest of the world has not yet accepted" (TKK 14).

Throughout the novel, *The Krishna Key*, Sanghi completely tries to crack the veracity of the epic Mahabharata through his protagonist Ravi Mohan Saini, a history professor. He argues the occurrences of the Kurushetra war though the dating of the war is both subjective and controversial. Sanghi, in order to prove the occurrence of Mahabharata, brings in the evidences by Professor Nahari Achar through astronomical observations. He takes into account the three planetary conjunctions that occurred on the eve of the war – the conjunction of Saturn with Aldebran; Retrograde Mars before reaching Antares and Lunar eclipse near Pleiades. These conjunctions are considered to be the sign of ill omen by Vyasa. He has also found that these conjunctions have occurred at different times the Kurushetra. Achar by analyzing various verses from the epic and examining the incidents that happened on 11 September 2001, concludes that this was a historical date of destruction were a series of continuous four coordinated terrorists attack took place in the US by the Islamic terrorist group by Al Qaeda.

Krishna is recorded by the Greeks as having lived a hundred and thirty eight generations before the times of Alexander and Chandragupta Maurya. Assume the midpoint of Chandragupta's reign as 307 BCE. Now, assuming 20 years per generation – which is a fairly good average where ancient Indian Dynasties are involved Krishna should have lived nearly 2760 years before 307 BCE. This ends up with 3067 BCE. Lord Krishna was the ninth incarnation of Lord Vishnu and thus it marks the dawn to the Kaliyuga. Thus, through the Surya Siddhantha, it is believed that Mahabharata must have taken place at 3067 BCE.

Sanghi takes into account the rectangular seal found out in deep - sea diving expeditions off the coast of Gujarat. The seal measures 20x20 mm, and has a square peg with three animal motifs as bull, unicorn and goat. The uniqueness of the seal which helps us to associate Mahabharata is the animal motif of the Unicorn. The Unicorn is called as Ekashringa, the one horned which appears as the prime symbol of Vishnu and the Vedic knowledge he taught. The

seal with three animal motifs of bull, unicorn and goat were found at three different places such as Kalibangan, Kurushetra and Mathura. This proves that considering Krishna as a mythical figure is absolutely false. The discoveries and the archeological findings of the historians vary only due to the climatic changes and also due to the fact that Dwarka had been rebuilt for seven times. Actually, Dwarka was built in the sea by the Land Reclamation method.

Sanghi also brings in the radiation level as marked at Rajasthan in India to prove the historicity of Mahabharata, where we can find the detailed explanation of the Brahma Astra, the deadliest weapon ever known to the mankind during the olden period. Interestingly, Oppenheimer, the creator of the modern atomic bomb strongly believed that the atomic bomb was not the first one in the world. He was familiar with the Sanskrit and he says “*I am become death, the Destroyers of the worlds*” (Doyle 120). This line is similar to the line in Bhagavad Gita: “*I become Time to end the world, set on my course to destroy the universe*” (120). Mahabharata can be considered as a tale, but Krishna’s name in Upanishad, Rigveda and Atharvaveda is unexplainable. Krishna’s name getting repeated in many Vedas suggests that Krishna is not only a mythical character but also a character that really existed in this world.

Sanghi has also provided the novel with immense knowledge and the depth for the people to ponder and analyze over. Truths and beliefs vary from place to place and religion to religion. Each truth has its own value. The myth Mahabharata is just considered to be a literary piece by the people of other religion, but the Hindus worship the characters of Mahabharata. Many archeologists have taken effort to prove that the mythical characters that come in the Mahabharata are real. Sanghi has also used many proofs of the archeologists and argued in this novel that the characters in the Mahabharata are real and they had existed.

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