

History Interfacing Myth in Ashwin Sanghi the Krishna Key

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Abstract: *The Syamantaka diamond is described as an antiquated and fabled artefact that is intricately entwined with Indian mythology in Ashwin Sanghi's book The Krishna Key. Legend has it that the jewel was formerly owned by Surya, the sun god, and that possessing it may bring great wealth and success. The story's protagonist, historian Ravi Mohan Saini, learns that the Syamantaka diamond is a genuine, tangible artefact with a complicated past that dates back to the era of Krishna and beyond, rather than just a myth. The TajMahal is a storehouse of historical mysteries in addition to being a mausoleum.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Syamantaka diamond is described as an antiquated and fabled artefact that is intricately entwined with Indian mythology in Ashwin Sanghi's book *The Krishna Key*. Legend has it that the jewel was formerly owned by Surya, the sun god, and that possessing it may bring great wealth and success. The story's protagonist, historian Ravi Mohan Saini, learns that the Syamantaka diamond is a genuine, tangible artefact with a complicated past that dates back to the era of Krishna and beyond, rather than just a myth. The Taj Mahal is a storehouse of historical mysteries in addition to being a mausoleum. The plot indicates that the monument is a key location in Saini's journey since it might provide information regarding the whereabouts of the Syamantaka diamond. The story is made more mysterious and alluring by the link between the jewel and the TajMahal, which draws readers into a web of mystery and excitement. Saini discovers numerous historical and mythological allusions that connect the Syamantaka jewel to distinct eras and locations in Indian history as he explores the jewel's past.

Satrajit, a Yadava chief, had worshipped the sun god Surya, devotedly. When Surya appeared before him and granted him a wish, Satrajit asked for the precious Syamantaka stone, which Surya generously bestowed upon him. Satrajit presented the stone to his brother Prasenajit. Unfortunately Prasenajit was attacked by a lion. Having killed Prasenajit, the lion made off with the stone but was himself attacked by Jambavan, the king of bears, who carried it away. With my reputation as a butter thief, the needle of suspicion pointed to me. I had to prove my innocence so I set out to track down the bear's cave and retrieve the stone. Mercifully, I was successful in my endeavour (131).

TajMahal emphasizes the monument's lasting value and possible usefulness as a repository of antiquated knowledge. Sanghi presents the TajMahal as a symbol of historical depth and enigmatic attractiveness, going beyond its well-known romantic and architectural appeal. Sanghi skilfully combines reality and imagination throughout the book to create an engaging story that keeps readers on the edge of their seats. The relationship between the Syamantaka diamond and the TajMahal forms a crucial element in this intricate design, connecting myth and reality as well as the past and present. Thus, *The Krishna Key* turns the TajMahal from a historical landmark into a key component of an exciting journey enhanced by the fascination of old tales and the enthusiasm of contemporary discoveries. It is known by the name Syamantaka, declared Sir Khan, releasing a puff of Cuban cigar smoke from his mouth to add dramatic effect to his words. (332)

In *The Krishna Key* by Ashwin Sanghi, Emperor Ashoka, one of ancient India's most celebrated rulers, is depicted as a transformative figure who played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism. After the brutal Kalinga War, Ashoka experienced a profound change of heart, leading him to embrace non-violence and dharma. He established the Edicts of Ashoka, a series of inscriptions promoting Buddhist principles and ethical governance. Sanghi's novel intertwines historical facts with fiction, portraying Ashoka as a pivotal character whose legacy impacts the novel's contemporary

narrative, blending history with the thriller's unfolding mystery. The novel also references the concept of the Ashtha Cheeranjeevis, eight immortal being in Hindu mythology believed to live through the ages until the end of the current Kali Yuga. These immortals, including figures like Hanuman and Parashurama, are woven into the story, symbolizing the eternal struggle between good and evil. Sang utilizes these mythical characters to deepen the novel's exploration to deepen the novel's exploration of Indian mythology and its enduring influence on present-day events. The AshthaCheerabjeevis serve as metaphors for timeless wisdom and resilience, anchoring the novel's thematic core in the rich tapestry of Indian mythological tradition.

In *The Krishna Key* by AshwinSangi, the Babri MasjidvsRamjanmbhoomi conflict serves as a significant backdrop to the novel's intricate plot. The story intertwines historical and mythological narratives with contemporary events, creating a compelling thriller that explores the religious and cultural tensions inherent in the Ayodhya dispute. Through meticulous research and imaginative storytelling, Sanghi weaves the complex history of the Babri Masjid and the claims surrounding the birthplace of lord Rama into his narrative, enriching the fictional plot with real historical events. The novel delves into the historical and archaeological aspects of the Ayodhya dispute, reflecting on the controversies surrounding the existence of a Ram temple at the site of the Babri Masjid. Sanghi uses his protagonist, a historian named Ravi Mohan Saini, to investigate the ancient secrets and symbols that hint at a deeper connection between the present-day conflict and ancient Indian history. This exploration provides readers with a nuanced understanding of the historical claims made by both Hindu and Muslim communities, as well as the political motivations that have fuelled the dispute over the year.

The novel also portrays how the Ramjanmabhoomi issue has been manipulated for political gain. Sanghi illustrates the way in which political parties and leaders have used the controversy to stoke communal tension, gaining support by appealing to religious sentiments. This manipulation is depicted as a dangerous game that has far-reaching consequences, not just for the people directly involved, but for the entire nation. The novel reflects on the cyclical nature of history where similar events recur, driven by the same underlying forces of power and belief.

Sanghi's narrative further explores the psychological and emotional impact of the Babri Masjid or Ramjanmabhoomi conflict on the Indian populace. The demolition of the mosque and the subsequent violence left deep scars on the collective memory of the nation. Through his characters, Sanghi show the personal and societal turmoil that arises from such a divisive issue, highlighting the human cost of religious and ideological battles. The novel suggests that these conflicts are not just about physical sites, but about the deeper struggle for identity and meaning in a rapidly changing world. Ultimately, *The Krishna key* present the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi controversy as a microcosm of the larger clash between history and mythology, reason faith, past and present. Sanghi uses this real life conflict to drive home the idea that history is often a matter of interpretation, influenced by the biases and agendas of those who record it. The novel challenges readers to think critically about the narratives they accept and the forces that shapes their understanding of history, urging a deeper reflection on the complexities of faith, identity, and power in modern India.

Encounters with the Myths in Ashwin Sanghi's *The Krishna Key* is a central theme that drives the novel's narrative and shapes the journey of its characters. Sanghi expertly blends historical fact, mythological tales, and contemporary fiction to create a story that delves deep into the mysteries of ancient Indian, particularly the legends surrounding Lord Krishna. Through the protagonist Ravi Mohan Saini's quest, the novel explores how myths are not just stories from the past, but living narratives that continue to influence the present. One of the key aspects of *The Krishna Key* is how it intertwines history with mythology, blurring the lines between the two.

The novel suggests that myths are not mere fabrications but are often rooted in historical events, which over time have been embellished or altered to fit cultural narratives. Sanghi presents Krishna a figure revered in Hindu mythology, as a historical figure whose life and teachings were grounded in reality. The story suggests that the tales of Krishna's divine exploits might be allegorical interpretations of real events that took place during a bygone era. Throughout the novel, Sanghi takes readers on a journey through ancient Indian history, touching upon various myths associated of the Yadava dynasty, the epic battle of Kurukshetra, and the hidden treasures ofDwarka. Each of these myths is re-examined through the lens of historical and archaeological evidence, creating a narrative that challenges the reader to reconsider the boundary between myth and history.

In *The Krishna Key*, myths are portrayed not just as stories of the past, but as powerful tools that shaped identity and exert influence over people. The novel demonstrates the myth can be used to assert power, both in the past and it the

present. The characters in the novel, particularly the antagonists, use the myth of Krishna's legacy to justify their actions and to seek control over other. Sanghi illustrates how myths are often appropriated by those in power to create a sense of legitimacy and to mobilize masses toward a particular cause. For instance, the legend of Krishna reincarnation is used by the novel's antagonist to justify a series of murders and to claim a divine right to rule. This character's manipulation of myth highlights the dangers of taking mythology at face value and using it to serve personal agendas. Through this, Sanghi raises important questions about the role of myths in society.

The novel's protagonist, Ravi Mohan Saini, is a historian who embarks on a quest to uncover the truth behind the myths surrounding Krishna. His journey is not just a physical one, as he travels across India to various ancient sites, but also to understand the deeper meanings of these myths. Saini's encounters with the myths are characterized by a constant tension between belief and scepticism. He is guided by a scientific and rational approach but is also open to the idea that there might be truths in myths that cannot be easily explained by logic alone. Saini's quest is emblematic of the broader human desire to seek out the truth, to understand the origins of the stories that have suggested that while myths may be based on historical events, they have evolved over time to convey moral and philosophical truths that resonate with human experience. Saini's journey reveals that the search for truth is often as important as the truth itself, as it challenges individuals to confront their own beliefs and assumptions.

In *The Krishna Key*, Ashwin Sanghi masterfully intertwines history with mythology, creating a narrative that blurs the lines between what is believed to be myth and what might have been historical reality. This fusion is central to the novel, as it revolves around the idea that the legendary stories of Lord Krishna, often seen purely as mythological, could have roots in actual historical events. Sanghi delves into ancient Indian scriptures, archaeological findings, and historical theories to propose that the tales of Krishna, his divine birth, his heroic deeds, and his role in *The Mahabharata* might reflect the life of a real historical figure whose influence shaped ancient Indian civilization. By doing so, he challenges the conventional understanding of mythology as purely allegorical, suggesting that these stories could also be repositories of historical knowledge.

One of the key ways Sanghi interfaces history with myth is through the novel's exploration of ancient sites and artefacts connected to Krishna. For instance, the ancient city of Dwarka, often regarded as Krishna's kingdom, is presented not just as a mythological location but as an actual archaeological site with ruins submerged off the coast of modern-day Gujarat. The novel incorporates historical research and scientific theories about the existence of Dwarka, using these to build a narrative that suggests the city's legendary status could be grounded in historical reality. Sanghi uses such examples to weave a story where every mythological clue leads to a historical trail, blending the sacred with the scientific. This approach creates a rich tapestry that makes readers question the origins of ancient myths and their possible connections to real events and places.

Additionally, Sanghi uses the life and teachings of Krishna, particularly from texts like *The Bhagavad Gita* and *The Mahabharata*, to illustrate how mythological narratives can encapsulate historical truths and societal values. The novel reinterprets Krishna's role in these epics, exploring the idea that his strategic brilliance, leadership, and moral dilemmas might reflect the actions of a historical figure rather than a purely divine being. By placing Krishna within a historical context, Sanghi invites readers to consider how ancient texts, often dismissed as myth, can provide insight into the social, political, and cultural dynamics of their time. This not only makes the mythology more relatable but also elevates the historical significance of these ancient narratives, showing how they have shaped collective memory and cultural identity over centuries.

Sanghi's blending of history and myth also extends to the overarching quest in the novel, where the protagonist, Ravi Mohan Saini, seeks to uncover *The Krishna Key*, a relic that is said to hold immense power and wisdom. This quest symbolizes the broader human pursuit of understanding the past and reconciling it with the present. As Saini deciphers ancient scripts, explores historical sites, and encounters modern day threats, the narrative reflects a constant dialogue between mythological beliefs and historical evidence. The interfacing of these elements underscores the idea that myths are not just fanciful tales but are often rooted in real human experiences, passed down through generations and interwoven with historical fact. Through this intricate weaving of myth and history, *The Krishna Key* challenges readers to look beyond the surface of ancient stories and to explore the deeper truths that may lie within them, bridging the gap between the past and the present.

In *The Krishna Key*, Ashwin Sanghi uses mythology as a cornerstone of the novel's plot, intricately blending ancient legends with a contemporary thriller. The story revolves around the life and teachings of Lord Krishna, one of the most revered figures in Hindu mythology, and explores how his mythological narrative is not just a set of stories but a complex tapestry of clues that influence the present day quest of the characters. The novel begins with the murder of a prominent historian, setting off a chain of events that leads the protagonist, Ravi Mohan Saini, on a quest to find a sacred artefact known as *The Krishna Key*. This relic is believed to hold immense power, and its origins are deeply tied to the legends of Krishna, including his divine birth, miraculous deeds, and role in the epic *Mahabharata*.

Sanghi draws heavily on Krishna's mythology, using it as both a plot device and a thematic element that drives the novel's exploration of truth, power, and the eternal conflict between good and evil. Each chapter begins with a recounting of Krishna's life, from his early exploits as a cowherd in Vrindavan to his strategic brilliance in guiding the Pandavas during the Kurukshetra war. These mythological interludes are not mere retellings they are cleverly linked to the novel's unfolding mystery, suggesting that Krishna's life is a map that can be decoded to unlock secrets of the past. The narrative often reflects on Krishna's philosophical teachings from *The Bhagavad Gita*, particularly the ideas of Dharma and Karma, which resonate with the characters' moral dilemmas and the challenges they face in their quest.

The novel also explores the symbolism of Krishna's various incarnations and exploits, using them as metaphors for the trials faced by the modern-day characters. For instance, the legend of Krishna lifting the Govardhan Hill to protect his devotees from a storm sent by the god Indra is mirrored in the protagonist's own efforts to shield his friends and allies from the forces that threaten them. Similarly, the theme of deception and disguise, a recurring element in Krishna's stories, is echoed in the plot's numerous twists, betrayals, and the shifting identities of the characters. This interplay between the ancient myths and the present-day storyline not only adds depth to the narrative but also underscores the timeless nature of Krishna's teachings, highlighting how these ancient lessons remain relevant in contemporary context. Through its intricate use of mythology, *The Krishna Key* also raises questions about the nature of belief and the ways in which myths are used to shape history and cultural identity. Sanghi delves into the idea that myths are not just stories of the past but living narratives that continue to influence and inspire. The novel's blending of Krishna's divine lore with modern scientific inquiry and historical research challenges the reader to consider the fine line between faith and evidence, prompting a deeper reflection on how myths serve as both a source of cultural heritage and a tool for understanding human experience. In this way, Sanghi not only tells a gripping story but also engages in a broader conversation about the enduring power of mythology in shaping the human psyche and the world around us.

The Krishna Key by Ashwin Sanghi is a thriller novel that seamlessly blends history, mythology, and fiction. The book revolves around the protagonist, Ravi Mohan Saini, a historian who embarks on a quest to uncover the secrets of an ancient seal that could prove the existence of Krishna, the Hindu deity, as a historical figure rather than just a mythological one. Sanghi's narrative weaves together elements of Hindu mythology, particularly stories about Krishna, with various historical events and archaeological evidence, challenging the conventional boundaries between myth and history. The novel explores the possibility that the mythological stories of Krishna are not just fables but have historical grounding that has been obscured over time.

One of the key interfaces between history and Hindu mythology in *The Krishna Key* is the exploration of ancient Indian civilizations. Sanghi delves into the Indus Valley Civilization, linking it to the legendary city of Dwarka, which is believed to have been founded by Krishna. Through historical and scientific references, such as archaeological findings and ancient scriptures, the novel suggests that mythological places like Dwarka might have been real and historically significant. This approach underscores the idea that myths can often be rooted in historical realities, even if those realities have been embellished or altered over time through oral tradition and cultural storytelling.

The novel also addresses the concept of Krishna as an avatar of Vishnu in Hindu mythology, exploring his role in *The Mahabharata* and *The Bhagavad Gita*. Sanghi reinterprets these stories through a historical lens, positing that Krishna might have been a great leader or a historical figure whose deeds were mythologized. By drawing parallels between mythological accounts and historical events, such as battles and political conflicts, the book suggests that the mythological narratives of Krishna could be metaphorical representations of actual historical events. This blending of myth and history challenges readers to rethink the nature of ancient texts, seeing them not just as religious or cultural stories but as potential historical records.

The Krishna Key also touches upon the idea of time and cyclical time, which is a recurrent theme in Hindu mythology. Sanghi uses this concept to connect various historical epochs, suggesting that history repeats itself in cycles, much like the yugas described in Hindu cosmology. This cyclical view of time blurs the line between past and present, allowing the author to interweave different time periods in the narrative, further merging history and mythology. By presenting Krishna as a historical figure who transcends time, the novel raises questions about the continuity of cultural and historical legacies and the way myths preserve.

Overall, Ashwin Sanghi's *The Krishna Key* serves as an intriguing exploration of how history and Hindu mythology interface, using a fictional narrative to propose that myths may hold kernels of historical fact. The novel invites readers to consider the possibility that ancient myths are not merely fanciful tales but could be reflections of real historical events, preserved and passed down through the ages in the form of religious and cultural narratives. Sanghi's blend of rigorous research, creative storytelling, and thought provoking hypotheses makes *The Krishna Key* a compelling read for anyone interested in the intersection of history and mythology.

In *The Krishna Key* by Ashwin Sanghi, historical elements are intricately woven into the fabric of the story, creating a compelling narrative that blurs the line between myth and history. Sanghi uses a mix of historical facts, archaeological findings, and ancient texts to craft a believable alternate history that supports the novel's central plot. Here's a closer look at how historical elements are integrated into the story. Sanghi incorporates the Indus Valley Civilization as a key historical backdrop, suggesting connections between the lost city of Dwarka and Harappan sites. The novel speculates on the possible links between Krishna's time and this ancient civilization, proposing that Krishna could have been a historical figure who lived during this period. The novel references the discovery of an underwater city off the coast of Gujarat, India, which some archaeologists believe could be the legendary city of Dwarka mentioned in *The Mahabharata*.

Sanghi uses this as evidence to blur the boundaries between Krishna's mythological city and historical fact. Sanghi brings in the legend of Ashoka's secret society, the Nine Unknown Men, who were entrusted with guarding dangerous knowledge. This historical element is reimagined as part of a broader conspiracy linked to Krishna's legacy, suggesting that the society was established to protect secrets from Krishna's era. The novel references Alexander's invasion of India and his encounters with the subcontinent's rich spiritual and philosophical traditions, suggesting that his campaigns may have been influenced by or connected to the knowledge from Krishna's time. Sanghi integrates ancient Indian scriptures, particularly the Vedas, as sources of hidden knowledge. He interprets verses and symbols from these texts in a way that supports the narrative of Krishna's historical existence. The book delves into astronomical and astrological data from ancient texts to try to establish a historical timeline for Krishna's life, blending mythological accounts with attempts at scientific validation.

The novel has references of various archaeological discoveries from sites like Mohenjo-Daro, using them to build a case for a historical Krishna figure who was a leader or a significant figure in the Indus Valley Civilization. The story integrates the Peacock Throne, often associated with Mughal rulers, into a narrative that links it to Krishna's legacy. This fictional connection serves as a symbolic bridge between different historical eras. Sanghi discusses the repeated destruction and reconstruction of the Somnath Temple, which is historically documented. The novel ties this to a larger narrative about the protection of Krishna's legacy and sacred artefacts. The novel uses various sacred and historical locations, like Mount Kailas, to enhance the storyline, presenting them as places of hidden power and ancient knowledge. Sanghi often draws parallels between Indian mythology and other ancient civilizations, such as the Greeks, to suggest that myths across cultures might share a common historical thread. For example, he draws connections between Krishna's legends and the myths of Hercules, exploring the idea of cross-cultural mythological diffusion. The novel delves into ancient Indian texts that describe advanced technology, like flying machines and powerful weapons, drawing parallels to modern nuclear technology.