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**Discovering the Concealed History from Mythological Patterns in
Ashwin Sangi's *The Krishna Key***

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ABSTRACT

The Krishna Key is Ashwin Sangi's third novel which brings to limelight the discovery of concealed history from mythological patterns. Through the fictional character Ravi Mohan Saini, the author of this novel tries to figure out the historical Krishna who lived in Sarasvati Civilization during 3067 BCE at the time of Mahabharata war. Krishna's life and Mahabharata has been seen through the methodical amplification supported by many historical and geographical findings. His narrative style is remarkable which rightly makes him the Indian Dan Brown. The novel revolves around a History Professor who tries to prove his innocence against a murder charge and his tutelage who does her research on the historicity of Mahabharata.

Key Words: Myth, History, Krishna, Mahabharata, Sarasvati Civilization.

Ashwin Sangi is an Indian Fiction writer of thriller genre. Sangi has written *The Rozabel Line*, *Chanakya's Chant*, *PrivateIndia* (co-written with James Patterson), *13 bloody steps to Bloody Good Luck*, *Sialkot Saga*, *Private Delhi* (co-written with James Patterson) and *Krishna Key* which is his third novel was released in August 2012. He is considered as an Indian Dan Brown exclusively for his narrative style. Most of the works of Sangi is based on myth and history.

The Krishna Key authored by Ashwin Sangi deciphers the historical Krishna from the mythical Krishna. It also makes an attempt to unfold the historical secrets behind Mahabharata. The novel revolves around a History Professor who tries to prove his innocence against a murder charge and his tutelage who does her research on the historicity of Mahabharata. The book (*The Krishna Key*) runs parallel with the story of Lord Krishna and fictional crime investigation. The fiction opens with the murder of Anil Varshney at Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan. Ravi Mohan Saini was one of the closest friends of Anil Varshney who is considered to be the star professor at Stephen's College in New Delhi. He taught the most interesting course, the history of mythology was suspected to have his hand behind the murder.

Professor Ravi Mohan Saini asks a question to his students during a presentation in the classroom about the fixed belief system on mythical perception of the great epic *Mahabharata* and his historical approach which is evident when he announced his students, "There are many who believe that *Mahabharata* is a myth. Indeed, many of you view the epic as a collection of stories based upon wisdom of the ages but you do not see it as an actual historical event. Well, we are going to change our assumption today" (KK 11).

Saini, during a presentation said his students about a fact mentioned in Mahabharata about the terrible planetary omens that Sage Vyasa said Dhritarastra on the eve of the Great War. The three omens were conjunction of Saturn with Aldebaran and another was retrograde Mars before reaching Antares and the third omen was Lunar Eclipse near Pleiades. In the university of Memphis Professor Achar made a research to find the exact date of Mahabharata. He researched on the three omens and came out with overlapping dates but all three astronomical events took place in a day among the overlapping dates which made him to come to a conclusion that Mahabharata must have occurred in 3067 BCE.

The Professor and his tutelage Priya was immersed in a discussion about the historic Krishna and the occurrence of Mahabharata five thousand years ago (3067 BCE). When Priya had lot of confusion with the dates of Great War, Saini asked Priya to look outside Mahabharata and told her to relate the incidents other than Mahabharata and corroborate the same date with other events. He said,

Let us not rely on Indian sources and instead turn to Greek references, shall we? Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya made his first written reference to Krishna. In his account, Krishna is called Heracles. The Greeks renamed many Indian deities after their own, and the Greek usage of the name Heracles was influenced by the term Hari, the common expression used for Krishna. Now what does Megasthenes tell Heracles? He writes that the Souraseni were actually the Shurasenas- the Yadava descendants of Vasudeva's father, Shurasena and Krishna was a Yadava himself. (kk 13)

After the comparison of Krishna and Heracles Saini continued to talk of the historical evidence of Methora which was described by Megasthenes. Methora is considered as 'Mathura' where Krishna was born. It is mentioned by Greeks that Krishna lived one hundred and thirty years before the generation of Alexander and Chandragupta Maurya (307 BCE). So, Krishna must have lived 2,760 years before 307 BCE. With the help of arithmetics it is known that Krishna lived in 3067 BCE, the time of Mahabharata War.

Anil Varshney invited Ravi Mohan Saini to the archaeological site at Kalibangan, the arid desert with oven like temperature. While conversing with Ravi, Varshney said about the lush green Kalibangan which was once part of Sarasvati civilization which we now consider as Indus Valley Civilization. Varshney also mentioned Sarasvati was not a mythical river. He mocked Ravi by telling that it's time to rewrite the history and said about an evidence from remote earth – sensing satellite pictures. He took a map created by ISRO-The Indian Space Research Organisation. Archaeological excavations and geological findings were corroborated in the pictures. When Saini looked at the map he saw the dried river bed of Sarasvati from which he drew a conclusion by telling that,

More than five thousand years ago, a mighty river- commonly referred to in the Vedas as Sarasvati flowed through this arid desert into Arabian Sea. The nothingness that you see around was a lush vegetation and Pastureland five thousand years ago! Kalibangan was part of this great Sarasvati civilization... Tectonic movements of Indian Subcontinent had resulted in the Sarasvati migrating west-northwest. The effect was that its two tributaries, the Yamuna and Sutlej, migrated in opposite direction, the former joining Ganga and the latter Indus (KK 20-21).

Varshney gave Saini a cardboard box which had a seal inside containing animal symbols of bull, unicorn and goat engraved in an anticlockwise direction. Unicorn is the most common image of Sarasvati civilization and refers to Mahabharata in which Ekashringa is the prime symbol of Vishnu- Krishna. It also has a connection to Varaha Avatara. Krishna had been considered merely as a mythological figure but he is a great historical figure who lived in Sarasvati Civilization. The greater Vedic community was the inhabitants of the great Sarasvati Civilization who wrote Vedas and Upanishads. It is the main reason for considering Kalibangan and Mohenjo-Daro as important places.

Varshney also remarked that archaeologists have discovered fire altars in Kalibangan which proves the fact that Kalibangan indeed was a Vedic settlement and from Mohenjo-Daro they discovered Great bath which is used for ritual bathing. He also said about the discovery of different seals containing the image of swastika, symbol of yogic meditation which succeeds in giving a clear picture of the symbols of Vedic origin.

Varshney said Saini that the seal which he gave him is Krishna's ancient passport system of his Kingdom, Dwaraka which is evident from a passage written in Harivamsa, an appendix to the Mahabharata. It is mentioned in Sanskrit as, "Mudrayaasah gacchantu rajno ye gantumipsavahi; Na chamudra pravestavyo dwaarpaalaya pashyatah..." (kk-22) which means every citizen of Dwaraka will be allowed to enter the city only if they show the passport (seal) to the duty guards of the city.

In this manner Ashwin Sangi has very beautifully woven the threads of fiction, history and myth in an accurate ratio to give the readers a realistic picture of his craft. The thriller explores the ancient secrets and historic evidence of Mahabharata, Vedic age and Lord Krishna through his fictional characters. The author has cast the right spell with his magical wand of letters because a person who has started to read the novel will forget that it is a fiction and perceive the fiction as fact through his mind's eye.

ABBREVIATION

KK- Krishna Key

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