

Mists of mystery

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“MASTER the knot”, this is not just the last line of the book, but the key undercurrent that as a reader one can feel pulsating through the criss-cross of the narrative in *The Keepers of Kalachakra*, the latest offering from Ashwin Sanghi. Straddling principles of Vedanta, Buddhism, *Upanishads* and quantum physics Sanghi’s fifth book in the “Bharat” series is full of thrills, chills and... well of course, spills! A mythological thriller with a generous tempering of science and current world events, narrative of *The Keepers of Kalachakra* takes one on a roller coaster ride through different ages and countries across the globe. Dan Brown to *Interstellar* there are shades of a plenty that readers of this genre are familiar with.

Sanghi’s *Kalachakra* is not a simplistic wheel of time but an intricate continuum of mind, body, consciousness as well as the universe on the whole. Lengthy dialogues between different characters are used to explain the concept of wheel of time as well as its link with Vedanta, Buddhism and ancient scriptures. The story runs on different planes simultaneously as the author makes the scene shift from America to India to Japan to China to Russia, Syria, Turkey, Tibet, Australia etc. This swift change of scene with murders, killings and sinister violent schemes being executed at regular intervals make it an “edge-of-the-seat” thriller. The plot thickens as several top world leaders “die” in mysterious circumstances “of natural causes”. In a world that is fast hurtling into an abyss of Islamophobia, radicalisation and polarisation, the line between order and anarchy is becoming thinner and thinner. There are references to several real-time terrorist attacks and killings to set a stage that has a contemporary feel. It is in this backdrop that one sees the key protagonist Vijay Sundaram, a research scientist, getting sucked into the thick of con-

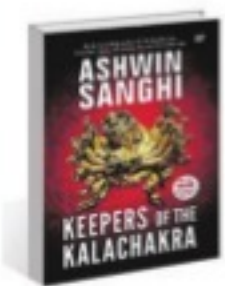


THRILLS & CHILLS: The novel is a mythological thriller with a generous tempering of science and current world events. The author has used lengthy dialogues between different characters to explain the concept of wheel of time as well as its link with Vedanta, Buddhism and ancient scriptures

spiracy as he joins Milesian Labs to carry out research on quantum behaviour beyond quantum. Being run by a secretive society Minerva, Milesian Labs is just a means to realise a sinister design against humanity in a systematic manner. As he shifts to the lab located in jungles in Uttarakhand, Vijay smells a larger conspiracy that could destroy humanity and endanger his own life.

Rooted firmly in Indian mythology, religion and history, this is a trademark Ashwin Sanghi book in all respects with intricate plot and diverse characters. Be it the radical Muslim leader Wahhabi Mafraqi, the mysterious Masoud, ageless sage Brahmananda, Russian scientist Mikhailov or the Kargil war veteran Rakesh Sharma, Sanghi has fine-tuned each one of those to the demands of the narrative. The author has termed it as one of the most difficult books written by him so far, mainly because he has no background in physics. But he has effectively overcome this handicap by thorough research on the topic

for over two years. Linking concepts given in Vedanta and *Upanishads* with quantum physics is no mean task and Sanghi has accomplished it remarkably convincingly. There is extensive use of diagrams, illustrations and pictures to make understanding of concepts easier for the readers. But the tragic flaw lies in the execution part. While the build-up of the story is well-detailed, even to the extent of being painfully slow in overstretched explanations of philosophy, mythology and religious connects, the climax is hurried. Thus, the whole crescendo built-up by the author falls flat in the last few pages as the story virtually hurtles down to its denouement. Keeping pace with the events while grasping the complex concepts of quantum twins, *Mandala*, *Shambhala*, *Sri yantra*, *Tantra*, *Atma Lingam* and theory of waves and particles can leave you astounded and overwhelmed. Surely, not a leisurely read, this one is going to keep you on tenterhooks for more reasons than one.



Keepers of the Kalachakra

by Ashwin Sanghi.
Westland.
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₹249