

Lord Ram was born in 5114 BC

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"Ram was and is for real. He was born on January 10, 5114 BC," Saroj Bala, IRS, Commissioner of Income Tax says, calmly, with the assurance of one who has tangible facts.

Taking on the contemporary historical interpretation of Ramayana as a religio-literary text, and Lord Ram as a semi-mythical figure, is this unassuming person who zealously devotes her spare time to research in history when she's not playing the tax mandarin.

And she has chosen the unusual combination of astronomy, Internet and literary texts to provide us a startling picture of Shri Ram. This might change the way we look at history and religion. We might refuse to begin reading Indian history from that comma, or hyphen called 'Indus Valley.' We might have to stretch the beginnings by a few thousand years because, as Saroj Bala says - Ram was born on January 10, 5114 BC.

Excerpts of an interview with the lady who has the intellectual courage to go beyond the obvious:

What got it all started...

As an amateur historian, I've always been interested in Indian culture and heritage. I am proud that we're Indians and the products of one of the oldest civilisations. However, British rule changed us; we developed a sense of being somehow inferior.

But I could never reconcile to theories like the theory of Aryan invasion to India in 1500 BC. That would make Indian civilization only 3,500 years old.

And if you choose archaeology to dig beyond 7,000 years, you'd have to dig more than 60 metres - something not being done in India as yet. So, archaeology is not the only answer. There's a lot of objective research of another kind that needs to be carried out in earnest.

So, how can we say Ram was born on January 10, 5114 B.C...

My colleague Pushkar Bhatnagar of Indian Revenue Service is the real originator of this theory. He acquired a software named Planetarium, used to predict planetary movements and configurations.

By entering in this software, precise details of planetary positions vis-à-vis zodiac constellations described by Maharishi Valmiki in the Valmiki Ramayan, it is possible to determine important dates starting from Shri Ram's birth-date to the date of his return to Ayodhya.

More than just Ram's date of birth...

The results have not just thrown up Shri Ram's date of birth; it has actually traced the entire sequence of incidents throughout Ramayan.

Pushkar Bhatnagar starts with tracing Ram's birth. Then he moves ahead in the narrative. Valmiki Ramayan states Ram was 25-years-old when he went to exile. When the configuration of planets described at this point is fed into the software, the date thrown up matches perfectly with Ram's age at that juncture of his life - 25

years.

Again in the 13th year of Ram's exile, during a war with Khar and Dushan, Valmiki describes a solar eclipse. The software proves that on that given day there was indeed a solar eclipse (with Mars in the middle). This solar eclipse and the particular configuration of planets could be seen from Panchavati (longitude and latitude plainly shown in the software).

Hanuman Saw 8 Constellations while flying to Lanka...

In the Sunderkand, when Valmiki describes Hanuman crossing the sea and returning from Lanka to Rameshwaram, he gives details of 8 constellations. Usually, one can see not more than 6 constellations at a given point of time. But since Hanuman was flying across, and it must have taken him approximately 4 hrs to get there, he could see 8 constellations - in two hours one constellation would have moved out of sight and another become visible. So, in a period of 4 hrs he saw 8 constellations!

Historicising Shri Ram. Man or God...

After researching on Shri Ram, I do believe he's a man who walked the earth in flesh and blood. There is an essential difference between the Valmiki Ramayana and the Tulsi Ramayana. Tulsidas was a devotee who looked up to Ram, but Valmiki was a contemporary. Valmiki has written Ram's life-history, as a biographer does - he's a contemporary of Ram, and this is not very different from what happens all over the world. Kings have always had their life-history written.

The submerged bridge...

Recently, NASA had put pictures on the Internet of a man-made bridge, the ruins of which are submerged in Palk Strait between Rameshwaram and Sri Lanka. This clearly should be treated as historical evidence that corroborates its mention in Valmiki Ramayana.

The puzzle of Indian history...

The presence of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Vedas cannot be explained by the short period between the decline of the Indus valley civilization and the Rig Vedic period. A civilization cannot suddenly burst into advanced writing.

One needs to look at various sources of history to re-build it. Especially when looking at ancient history. One needs to excavate, look at literature, ancient texts, astronomy.

Government apathy to archaeological diggings and investigation in this direction...

There's been a very strange development in the media and the people of India. We have started seeing ancient India as something equivalent to the word 'Hindu'. The very word Hindu came into circulation only after the advent of Islam in India. In Ramayana and the Vedas, there is no mention of the word 'Hindu'. At the most, there is only mention of terms like 'Aryavrat' or 'Bharatvarsh' and residents here are called as 'Aryans'. Since centuries, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs have been living in this country and it's their land as much as it is to a Hindu. Anything that has happened on this land in the past is their common heritage. But, unfortunately, politicians with vested interests have divided the people on artificial religious lines and making it appear that anything related to ancient India was perhaps related to Hindu, which is not the case and should not be the case.

There has never been any strong will...

It is not that researches have been not taken place. There has been excellent work done by noted historians like Sir Alexander Cunningham and Dr Lal. Cunningham has written as many as 21 volumes on ancient Indian history. But one needs special permissions to access these texts.

Unfortunately, Cunningham's work that has very important information has not seen the light of the day. Dr. Lal has pictured the ancient city of Dwarka and it can be read in 'The lost city of Dwarka'. He has listed out 1000 artifacts. Only 9 crores needed to be sanctioned by the government in placing a transparent tube to the sea-bed that could allow people to see for themselves the wonder that was Dwarka.

And now people equate the sum total of ancient history to 'a temple or no-temple' at Ayodhya. Delay in research also because science hadn't arrived...

Without the aid of science it is practically impossible to manually calculate the exact planetary configuration 7, 000 years back. It is science which is going to validate our history and prove that it is much older than 3, 500 years.

What would be the implications of your research on the society?

I seriously feel that there can only be positive effects of my research. In fact, Indians should seriously re-look how old is our history and culture. This is not the end of the research; it's just the beginning. People should be encouraged to do more in-depth research by all means such as archaeology, dating methods and oceanography.

Max Mueller had come up with the theory that Aryans had come to India in 1500 B.C. In the Internet, Max Mueller Foundations says that that they have re-looked at this theory and is of the opinion that this theory is no longer valid because Indian history is much older than that period. It's just that people have to open up their minds and find out the answers for themselves.