

Book Review

Genome to Om: Evolving journey of modern science to meta-science, 1st edition. Blueone Ink 2024. 504 pages. Price: Not mentioned.

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This book is an interesting analysis of the evolution of spirituality and the linkage of such thought processes as described in Vedic and other philosophies with evidence generated by modern technology. The nine chapters address nine themes. The authors have attempted to show a linkage between modern science and metascience represented by Genome and Om, respectively.

The first chapter is titled 'Genome: Marvels of Science and Technology'. This chapter takes the readers through a journey beginning with the original ancestors to the Anthropocene, old civilizations lasting several centuries, 'Samskara' as described in Vedic literature and *Upanishads*, genetics/epigenetics, DNA analysis of samples from Dwarka, shift to a Western thought, the evolution of modern science during 18th-20th centuries, nuclear technology, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence. Destructive consequences of self-centric modern science applications have been beautifully highlighted.

The second chapter deals with the perils of misuse of Science and Technology. It deliberates on the application of various modern science advancements during the current Anthropocene era and their positive and negative impact on ethical aspects as well as ecology, health, economy - increasing social disparities, cyber crimes, and so on. While the chapter describes many positive impacts of various scientific advancements, it raises several questions and cautions about the future scenario.

There are 22 precious illustrations taking readers along the journey from Mohenjo-daro (3rd century BCE), Dwarka (1500 BCE), Angkor Wat (9-12th AD depicting dinosaurs), ancient Chimeras, Milky Way, *Samudra Manthan* to United Nations' SDGs. These 22 plates provide proof that science and societies have evolved parallelly over the ages.

Chapter three provides stimulating, authentic material to deliberate on the origin of the cosmos

and life. It has interesting descriptions of the concept of the universe as seen through the prism of culture and civilization, Pythagoras' theorem (570-495 BCE) about earth, development of the telescope, earlier Vedic and Egyptian thoughts, Kepler's laws, extraterrestrial life, macrocosm versus microcosm, role of trinity (in different religions) in creation of universe, evolution of earth, universe, and space. It has an interesting discussion on how life came about – was it accidental? coincidental evolution?

Chapter four deals with the biological, social, and spiritual dimensions of life. There is an elegant description of evidence from fossils as old as 145-201 million years ago, links among living, non-living, and prions, examples from *Upanishads*, limitations of scientific perspective, and how that gap can be bridged by metascience. Discussions on social evolution, spiritual dimensions, understanding of various biochemistry processes, and limitations of that approach. Knowledge of the *Kundalini* (*Yoga-Vedanta*, *Chakras*, and *Nadi*) has been summarised aptly for analysis by scientific minds.

Chapter five debates on the mind. Beginning with a quote by Buddha, it discusses the differences between the brain and mind, the use of modern technologies like functional MRI to understand the brain function, relevance of dreams, and memory – linking it with current advancements in food, mind, and behaviour, *Yogas-Gunas*, advancements in psychology, psychiatry, and neurosciences. There are thought-provoking summaries about the evolution of various philosophies – Indian (*Kapila & Patanjali*), Eastern (Confucius), Aristotle & Plato, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and several others. This chapter highlights the convergence of thoughts among various civilizations, the relationship between mind and meditation, the healing power of the mind, and the use of technology to advance scientifically with rationality.

Chapter six focuses on the question of 'who am I'? Body or soul, much-debated thoughts of special creation versus evolution, true versus untrue at the same time. There is an interesting discussion on the construction of the body-mind complex and its connection with a higher power for a deeper purpose. Quoting the

philosophy of *Vedanta* and descriptions in *Upanishads* as well as examples from Greek and Western literature, it touches various important questions of identity and evolution – various aspects including physical, biological, psychological, and spiritual (religion, spirituality, and peace). This chapter shows that there is science in every aspect of the evolution of concepts of identity; one must be prepared to dispassionately analyse the same.

Chapter seven deliberates on the purpose of human existence, considering that humans are the finest and among the best living creatures. There is an elegant discussion on the philosophical purpose (fulfilment) of life, spirituality, religion, various aspects of ‘good’ health, transcending materialism, humanism, and the *Vedic* approach/approach in other cultures towards understanding the purpose of life, stages of life – *Ashramas*, *Yogas* and ultimate purpose of life of what impact we leave on the world.

Chapter eight deals with death and beyond. There is an evidence-based description of the life-span of cells, the processes of aging and death, methods of reversing/slowing down senescence, regeneration from stem cells, the concept of *Chiranjeevi*, and different views among various cultures/religions. There is an interesting discussion on accepting death and preparing for the same, palliative care, and different aspects (humanitarian, ethical, religious, and legal) of euthanasia. This chapter stresses on integrating science and spirituality in the discussion about consciousness. It also touches on concepts of life beyond death – rebirth, philosophical concepts of *Moksha* and *Nirvana*.

Chapter nine describes the relevance of ‘The *Om* way’ to find unity in diversity. It cautions that the uncontrollable use of artificial intelligence and various other advancements can act as poisons. It describes the relevance of the *Samudra Manthan* in Hindu mythology to generate elixir. There is an emphasis on a balanced scientific approach. Evolution and challenges of modern society, especially due to consumerism –

moral code to manage the same in different societies/civilizations, metascience, and meta society (*Sat-Yug*, *Ram-Rajya* – peace and prosperity for all) have all been discussed.

Finally, this book talks of a journey from the current materialistic Anthropocene to an ideal *Omcene*, highlighting that *Aum* is ancient wisdom – it is a primordial sound, unity of consciousness in *Madunkya Upanishad*. By this approach we can advance towards unity in diversity and ascent of all.

Overall, this is a unique book dissecting the ancient as well as recent new knowledge. It contains an encompassing analysis of the evolution of human societies- linkage among scientific advancements, technology developments, social values, and thoughts/wisdom recorded in old scriptures, especially *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, as well as thought leaders over the centuries across the globe. Ultimately, this book strengthens the thinking that science and spirituality can co-evolve.

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