

'Ram was 39 years old when he killed Ravana'

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In an affidavit before the Supreme Court the Union government recently said the Ram Sethu was a natural formation, and in passing also [questioned the existence of Lord Ram](#).

The affidavit was retracted following widespread protests. Now Bharath Gyan, a Chennai-based NGO engaged in research on India's traditions and culture, has produced a report which states that Lord Ram did indeed exist, and even put a date on his birth: January 10, 5114 BCE (Before the Christian Era).

The NGO says it arrived at the conclusion by using a relatively new method -- archaeoastronomy, which combines astronomical with archaeological data.

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The NGO's founder-trustee **D K Hari** unveiled the research findings at a presentation in Mumbai last week. "We can say with confidence and pride that Ram existed historically," he told the gathering. "The most authentic text on Rama is Valmiki's Ramayan since it was written by Valmiki as a contemporary text. We have collaborated different aspects of Rama's life as mentioned in the Ramayan with scientific methodologies."

Bharath Gyan's Hari, who has been conducting research on traditional Indian knowledge for the past six years, spoke to [rediff.com](#)'s **Vicky Nanjappa** about the authenticity of his report, the reliability of archaeoastronomy and other issues.

Your research shows that Ram was a mortal. How will it go down in a culture that worships him as God?

Ram was a human being and also a king. It is anybody's personal choice to attribute divinity to him. In India we talk about *mathrubhava* and *pithrubhava*. We worship our parents and teachers as God. So why not Ram? He was a noble soul.

What do you attribute the divinity that was conferred on him to?

I don't want to comment on this. It is not my job.

There was a report by Pushkar Bhatnagar in 2003, which said something similar to your report. How is your report different from his? What is new in your report?

My report is based on the one prepared by Pushkar Bhatnagar. Not only his report, I have relied on several others to come to a conclusion through scientific eliminations.

You seem to attach significant importance to the Ram Sethu, suggesting that it should be looked into deeper for evidence of Ram. But the Archaeological Survey of India has concluded that it is nothing but a natural formation. What do you have to say to this?

Let me make it clear. The ASI had not done any digging around the Ram Sethu. In fact they do not have any knowledge on this. This is not what I am saying. They themselves have said so. Even their affidavit before the Supreme Court said so.

Archaeoastronomy sure is a mouthful. Why don't you simplify it for the common man? Tell us how you go about things in this science?

It is a technique of charting the past or the future sky using a scientific tool. This tool helps to arrive at planetary positions given a date in the past or the future and vice versa -- given a set of planetary configurations, arrive at the date either in the past or in the future.

Such tools are collectively called planetarium software. There are probably over 50 such different software available. Each software can be use specifically for a particular application, like plotting the current night sky chart, predicting eclipses and the like.

Indian civilisation is characterised by being embedded with night sky observations. Feeding the observations of the planetary configurations into the planetarium software gives us the English calendar dates for when these configurations could have occurred in the past. When these dates are logically arranged along with the events, it helps us to scientifically assign dates to events mentioned in Indian legends and historical texts and validate them.

Thus, the astronomical remains left behind in our literature can be analysed scientifically to arrive at historic dates for various events. This approach is parallel to archaeology where physical remains are analysed to arrive at historic dates and hence, gives rise to a new branch of scientific dating which may be called archaeoastronomy.

Tell us how you deciphered the Ramayan using archaeoastronomy. What were the difficulties you encountered during this process?

We relied upon several reports and mainly the configurations available in the Ramayan. The dates mentioned in the earlier texts including the Ramayan were tallied, entered into the software as mentioned above and a conclusion was drawn.

I would not say that the entire exercise was easy. It was a laborious procedure, which required plenty of study and patience. Moreover, there was always this aspect that the issue was sensitive. We have striven to be as accurate as possible.

How infallible is this exercise?

This process can be repeated by any person in the world. No person should unnecessarily deny the findings in our report. Let them do a study on the same, tally it with our report and then come to a conclusion. If we have committed a mistake, let them guide us or even correct us. We don't mind. But no person should deny it for the heck of it.

As per the dates you have charted in the Ramayan, Ram was almost 39 years old when he killed Ravana, not such a young man. He must have then set out on *vanvaas* at the age of 25. Isn't that too old for those times?

Why do say that? I think Ram took over as king at the right age. At the age of 25 he set out on *vanvaas* and at the age of 39 he defeated Ravana. This can be proved through scientific methods. I think it is perfectly correct.

Your technique must also give you a date for Ram's end?

No. We have not given any end date to Ram. We are able to give our findings based on the configurations mentioned in the various texts. The problem here is that there is no text available anywhere which could give us a configuration regarding the end of Ram. Hence, it is not possible to find out the exact dates unless the configurations are made available.

Why this fascination with proving the existence of Ram and other gods?

The media has taken a fascination to Ram. I have done a study on 64 different subjects. Moreover, I don't think it is wrong to find out about Ram. You write so much about film stars. Ram is an international hero and we ought to be proud of him as Indians.

What do you propose to do with your findings? Approach the government? The ASI?

I don't plan to approach the government with these findings. Why can't the media do it instead? This report is meant to create awareness. Let people discuss, debate it.

Your findings must be the toast of Hindu outfits. Are you aligned with any of them?

(Laughs) No, there is no alignment with any of the outfits. I think every Indian should be proud of Ram.

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