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## Reimagining Ancient Mythology as a Tool for Contemporary Narratives with Faith and Extremism in Ashwin Sanghi's *The Ayodhya Alliance*.

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### Abstract

*The Ayodhya Alliance* by Ashwin Sanghi is a political thriller that deftly combines nationalism, cyberwarfare, mythology, and contemporary politics. The work examines how old epic like the Ramayana are reinterpreted and used in modern electoral tactics, all set against the backdrop of Ayodhya, a city with religious and historical significance. *The Ayodhya Alliance* is a shadowy online organisation that uses surveillance technologies, AI-powered propaganda, and information warfare to try to subvert democratic regimes. In order to demonstrate how religion may be politicised in order to change national identity, the story follows the struggle between faith and fanaticism. Torn between patriotism, ethics, and loyalty, characters deal with difficult moral decisions. Sanghi raises important issues regarding the future of democracy, the place of history, and the morality of political power in India as he cautions against the deterioration of truth in a time when fake news and digital manipulation rule the day. Ashwin Sanghi demonstrates how epic stories – especially the Ramayana – are not merely cultural artefacts but also powerful political tools in the modern day. Reinterpreting Ayodhya's legacy turns into a battlefield where myth is warped to support contemporary viewpoints.

**Keywords:** Ayodhya, *Ramayana*, Cultural Identity, Ethics, Power and Propaganda.

*The Ayodhya Alliance* by Ashwin Sanghi is a fast-paced, multi-layered political thriller that examines the relationship between religion, mythology, contemporary politics, and cyberwarfare. This work connects with Sanghi's Bharat Series collection, combines elements of fiction with historical facts and current sociopolitical challenges to create an exciting and thought-provoking story. The delicate and politically fraught city of Ayodhya, a contentious and significant location in Indian culture and religious consciousness, is at the centre of the book. A high-ranking political figure's unexplained death

at the start of the book sets off a series of events that allude to a wider conspiracy. India is soon to face a national crisis with troubling ramifications for the future and profound historical foundations. A fictional political party and important personalities who are intricately linked to the nation's political landscape are at the centre of the narrative. There are intense power struggles between the ruling party and its opposition as general elections draw near. The outcome of Indian democracy is being influenced by a shadowy network of foreign powers, corporate manipulators, and hackers. In parallel, there is a historical plotline that has roots in ancient Indian mythology and the Ramayana. Sanghi uses embedded narratives and flashbacks to link mythological ideologies with contemporary political movements.

To examine how religious texts and epics are currently interpreted, politicised, and weaponised, he retells the tale of Lord Rama and the ancient city of Ayodhya. The main story point is the discovery of a covert operation called the Ayodhya alliance, a covert agreement between some national and foreign organizations that seeks to influence India's democratic system by a combination of mythology, propaganda, and technology. Under the pretense of cultural revival, this alliance seeks to reshape India's national identity through social engineering, AI-driven psychological warfare, digital manipulation, and fake news. Journalists, analysts, politicians, and intelligence officers are among the novel's protagonists. They attempt to decode digital trails, old manuscripts, and coded signals while working separately and occasionally against one another.

An intelligence officer named Razia and a cyber genius named Pranav emerge as important players who attempt to prevent the alliance from carrying out its strategy. The novel examines issues of political accountability, personal faith, ethical hacking, and patriotism through them. In order to keep the reader interested, Sanghi frequently switches between timelines and points of view in his clear, multi-layered storytelling. Readers are encouraged to investigate the truth behind the fiction via the inclusion of QR codes and links for factual validation. Criticizing the abuse of religion for political ends, the book warns of the precarious equilibrium between religion and government. It also challenges the ways in which history is selectively remembered or ignored in order to further contemporary objectives. Ashwin Sanghi expertly illustrates in this work, that how ancient mythology – especially the epic of the Ramayana – is reimagined and exploited to further contemporary political objectives, because of its rich religious and cultural past, the city of Ayodhya transcends its geographic location and becomes a representation of ideological strength. By fusing politics and religion, political forces in the book use mythological allusions to create emotionally stirring stories that appeal to popular emotions. Sanghi challenges this by pointing out how religious symbols and old tales are used as political ploys to influence elections and policy creation.

The *Ramayana* has endured as one of the most important epics in Indian literature, religion, and culture. It is a timeless story that teaches dharma (righteousness), moral principles, and the value of sacrifice, duty, and devotion. It was written by the sage Valmiki. Across languages, geographical locations, and generations, the tale of Lord Rama, his banishment, Sita's kidnapping, and the victory of good over evil has been told innumerable times throughout South and Southeast Asia. It has influenced social norms, political discourse, and ethical frameworks in addition to religious devotion. It has provided inspiration for creativity, spiritual direction, and a sense of national identity. As evidence of its unparalleled significance and cultural resonance throughout centuries, it is still being reinterpreted today in literature, theater, film, and even contemporary political themes.



Representation Photo: Shutterstock

[<https://images.news18.com/ibnlive/uploads/2021/10/ramayana-stone-carving-163472726216x9.png?impolicy=website&width=640&height=360>]

According to Vinay Nalwa, Valmiki used successive astronomical references for significant dates in Rama's life, noting the positions of planets, zodiac constellations, and other stars (nakshatras). Image used for representation: Shutterstock. The *Ramayana* by Maharishi Valmiki was possibly the first written account of Bharat's history. Furthermore, Maharishi Valmiki was the first poet to create an epic out on recollections and stories of Sri Rama's life. He was also Sri Rama's contemporary. Maharishi Valmiki was an accomplished astronomer as well. For significant dates in Sri Rama's life, he provided sequential astronomical references that showed the positions of planets, zodiac constellations, and other stars (nakshatras). The complex realities of modern-day India are reflected in this work, a gripping blend of politics, mythology, and technological warfare. Ashwin Sanghi demonstrates how history and religion may be used to gain power by deftly fusing old stories with contemporary sociopolitical concerns. The book is a relevant cautionary tale about the dangers of misinformation, internet manipulation, and the politicization of religion. It pushes readers to consider the ethical consequences of power, the legitimacy of national identity, and the motivations underlying political beliefs. The characters challenge us to be on guard in a time when truth can be fabricated and democracy itself is susceptible to unseen powers with its nuanced narrative and provocative ideas. A powerful commentary on the precarious relationship between faith, power, and technology in modern-day India. To highlight the risks of reinterpreting mythology for political purposes, Ashwin Sanghi employs his distinctive technique of fusing reality and fiction.

The work illustrates how historical narratives and religious sentiments may be twisted to affect public opinion by drawing comparisons between the ancient city of Ayodhya and the virtual battleground of today's elections. In addition to showing how national identity is manipulated by cultural and technological means, the story highlights the moral dilemmas that people who are caught between their own ethics and their public responsibilities face. Through its complex plot and rich symbolism, the narrative confronts the unbridled expansion of nationalism fueled by myth and false information and forces readers to consider the causes that construct democratic institutions. In the end, the Ayodhya alliance is a wake-up call and a warning to society to oppose the politicization of religion in a world growing more divided, defend the integrity of democracy, and uphold the sanctity of history.

By employing the *Ramayana* as a cultural and ideological backdrop for the developing political drama, Ashwin Sanghi forges a strong and symbolic bond with the narration. The city of Ayodhya, where Lord Rama was born, is a major symbol of faith, culture, and identity in addition to being a

geographical location. Sanghi investigates how political actors adapt the epic of *Ramayana*, particularly the tale of Rama's kingship and justice, to create contemporary narratives of cultural pride and nationalism. Lord Rama is invoked by political parties and movements as a means of gaining political legitimacy, influencing voters, and mobilizing large numbers of supporters. Sanghi, on the other hand, critically analyzes this manipulation, demonstrating how mythological images and religious sentiments can be warped for political ends. The *Ayodhya alliance* depicts a contemporary conflict between ethics and ambition, truth and propaganda, much like Rama's story in the *Ramayana* depicts a conflict between good and evil. Sanghi challenges readers to consider how mythology should uphold moral principles rather than be abused to control or divide through this profound thematic connection.

*The Ayodhya Alliance*, effectively demonstrates how myths from antiquity, particularly stories like the *Ramayana*, may be cleverly reworked and employed to influence contemporary political debates. According to Ashwin Sanghi, mythical symbolism is now a deliberate strategy used to sway public opinion, create ideological narratives, and support political aspirations rather than merely being a subject of cultural pride. *The Ayodhya Alliance* serves as a warning about the dangers of fusing myth with propaganda, critiques the distortion of sacred traditions in the name of power, and advocates for a more moral and respectful relationship with our cultural heritage that respects its spiritual depth rather than using it for political ends. Sanghi does this by showing how the legacy of Ayodhya and Lord Rama is reframed for democratic advantage.

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