

Technology in Hindu Mythology

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Knowledge and idea are two very important aspects for technology professionals. These are complements of each other - you cannot successfully implement ideas without knowledge, and you cannot effectively use your knowledge without ideas. Along with knowledge, one needs a lot of imagination to come up with a new idea that can be realized and implemented for the betterment of the society. Interestingly, the ideas on many of the technological advancement that we are witnessing today had already been articulated in holy books of Hinduism like Ramayana and Mahabharata that are believed to be written thousands of years back. Let's look at some of these technology-related ideas and also think whether they already had the knowledge before putting these ideas in writing.

In Ramayana, Ravan is said to have abducted Sita in the "Pushpak Viman". Apparently the "Pushpak Viman" described in Ramayana was much more advanced than the aircrafts today. Ravan got that "Pushpak Viman" from Kuber, who was considered the richest person at that time. How true, even today, aircrafts are very expensive, and only the richest can afford it.

In another episode, when "Lava" was lost, Valmiki produced "Kusha" from grass, which is analogous to cloning. Apparently again, the cloning he did was far more advanced than the cloning techniques of today. "Raktabij" is another similar citing, where every drop of his blood on earth produced his "Adult clone". On the other hand, Ganesh is an example of highly advanced organ transplant where the head of a quickly found elephant was implanted on the body of just beheaded boy. Had it been late, the boy would have died.

There is a very interesting incidence from Mahabharata as well. As Dhritarashtra was blind but wanted to know what was happening at the battlefield, Krishna gifted Sanjay with "Dibya drishti", so that he could see a "Live Telecast" of "Kurukshetra" and describe that to Dhritarashtra. "Dibya drishti" is analogous to modern television set in the sense that Krishna could not give it directly to Dhritarashtra but needed Sanjay. If you imagine a central computer system with wireless links that can accept voice commands or thoughts, then you can understand how cameras in the heaven, as in satellites of these days, would point to the locations which Dhritarashtra asked Sanjay to describe about. Therefore, "Dibya drishti" in modern description is a television set with a wireless link to the satellite and an access right to the system to control the cameras. The access permission was granted by the System Administrator, Krishna, who had all required technology at his disposal.

The "Astra" that were used in the battlefield were similar to the missiles, with "Bramhastra" resembling to the almighty nuclear bomb. They would not carry these weapons with them in the battlefield, rather, wirelessly log-in to a central control system to launch it and use GPS (Global Positioning System) to drop it exactly where they wanted. Makes some sense?

The purpose of reiterating these ancient writings here is to make the reader aware of the fact that those religious books contain a lot of ideas, may be many of which are yet to be realized to transform the human society in positive ways. By all means, one can look into those as philosophy and story with a moral, but the need of today is to see these as books full of ideas of technology for tomorrow. If you look at things with your eyes, you will only see, if you look at these with your technological brain instead, you will understand. Just a share of an extreme: can we one day travel at the speed of thought as described in there as "Antardhyan"?