

Book Review

Mani Bhawmik's *Code Name God*

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Review by

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The book with its unique title is a laudable attempt by a renowned scientist at unifying the latest theories of science about the universe and the basic truths of all the world religions. It has rightly been called 'the spiritual odyssey of a man of science' on the front cover. Dr. Mani Bhawmik sets out to demonstrate his spiritual development through physical hardship in the early years of his life, the enjoyment as well as frustration of worldly success afterwards and his search for a meaning in life. The author at length tries to prove scientifically the existence of God, that 'one source', and thereby strikes a balance between religious faith and scientific knowledge.

The book is divided into twenty chapters and has a coherent structure. Keeping in view of its contents, it has aptly been dedicated to 'Seekers of Truth of All Times'. The epigraph quoted from Albert Einstein is also in tune with the subject matter. The prologue, again, captures the reader's attention to the point of dealing with healing the wound created by the dichotomy between mind and matter, religion and science.

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Chapter 1 seems to record the disillusionment of 'a self –made millionaire' whose journey from rags to riches has robbed him of the 'visionary gleam' of his boyhood days. The actual process of stepping down memory lane starts from the following chapter entitled somewhat in a Dickensian style 'Great Expectations'. This auto-biography-like account continues up to Chapter 10 where he declares 'My journey from mud to marble was complete'. In course of his story, the author relates his upbringing under extreme poverty in a devout Hindu family. India was then suffering from the scourge of colonial oppression under the British Raj. Mani's family was actively involved in the Indian freedom movement, inspired by the teachings of M.K. Gandhi. Mani takes pains to describe the selfless sacrifice of such personalities as Matangini Hazra and he also compares it with his paternal grandmother's offering of her own share of the meagre meal to her grandson before she breathed her last.

It is curious, however, that the author never even mentions the role of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during the heyday of Indian freedom struggle. Nor does he seriously deal with Swami Vivekananda's writings that underlined the basic unity of all the world religions. It is because, perhaps, Mani had no contact, personal or otherwise, with those two modern architects of Indian ethos. It may also be that he was primarily catering to his readers in the U.S.A, who might be more familiar with the name of M.K.Gandhi. Moreover, Mani never seems to forget that he is a self-made millionaire with a mansion in Bel Air, California, with its "Olympic-sized swimming pool". This is something jarring for a man craving for a spiritual affinity with God.

Notwithstanding such slightly discordant notes, Mani's account of himself is more or less sincere, particularly when he describes his affairs with women in Chapter 11. Such frankness is really commendable in a writer. Mani's "Turning to the Source" begins from Chapter 12 and the following chapter which is a namesake of the book contains the author's musings over the theological discussions of different world religions. From Chapter 14 onwards we get in touch with Dr. Mani Bhowmik, the brilliant physicist, who can explain complex theories of modern physics about the nature of matter and universe in a very simple and lucid manner. With the help of quantum physics and unified field theory, the author wants to get to that "one source" or "unification" where science meets

religion. He often refers to such master physicists as Albert Einstein, Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose among others. In this context, he has to deal with the history of the universe, the unification of matter and energy and the origin of consciousness. He delves deep into the Big Bang theory and the theory of the “single primary field” from which everything seems to have emerged and which remains as a pervasive entity in everything like the human genome. The author comes to the conclusion that “the fundamental realities of the primary field and consciousness are inseparable aspects of the same underlying process”. He calls this “one source” of everything in the universe including matter and consciousness alike by its “code name God”.

The final chapter elaborates what the author terms “quantum meditation”, a version of the ancient practice of spiritual meditation. The point is to achieve an ultimate concentration and absolute peace of mind when one becomes aware of a “larger something”. Along with this prescription for meditation on a regular basis, Dr. Bhowmik also gives a few tips for keeping fit and healthy.

This kind of ending of the superb venture appears to be a little clumsy and unconvincing. The author set out to prove scientifically the existence of God; so, why should he end up with meditation and its effects? It is not clear whether he wants to prescribe a method or technique for the realization of God in one’s mind. This is not to be, because, realization of God is not a chemical experiment that can give you same results every time. It is a matter of revelation and intuitive experience. Actually, one does not require proving that there is one pervasive entity called God – either you believe in Him or you do not – both positions are valid unless you impose your faith upon others.

These observations apart, the book is immensely readable and it might be quite inspiring particularly for the Indian readers. In an age replete with separatism, social fragmentation and environmental pollution, Dr. Bhowmik’s call for unification and coherence deserves heartiest applaud. Finally, the publishers should be profusely thanked for bringing to light such new and fresh points of view.

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