



# A SIGN OF THREE

Every good novel is a combination of entertainment, education and enlightenment, says bestselling author Ashwin Sanghi

When I was a little boy, my literary education began at the hands of my grand-uncle, who lived in Kanpur. He was a voracious reader, a poet and a hard-nosed businessman, and his greatest treasure was his library, its shelves lined with hundreds of books from across the ages. A multilingual littérateur (he was fluent in English, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit, among other languages), he would say to me: “Ashwin, the world will always tell you to follow Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth. But remember, Lakshmi is inseparable from Saraswati, the Goddess of wisdom.”

He would send me a new book every week, each volume carefully handpicked to impart a particular lesson. My collection from *nanaji*, as I called him, comprises nearly 400 books,

including early editions of Richard Bach’s *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, C Rajagopal-achari’s *Mahabharata*, a rare edition of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, and even *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda, which he sent me when I was 13 years old!

While his was one literary stream flowing through my consciousness, another stream came from my mother, who would only read paperbacks – Jeffrey Archer, Sydney Sheldon, Harold Robbins... Reading the books she gave me felt like feasting on a thoroughly satisfying burger – I would consume each volume easily, quickly, and then wonder where it went. Subsequently, I loved the content that came from *nanaji* and the entertain-



INCREDIBLE SUCCESSES AND  
INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENTS

FIRST SUCCESSFUL  
HEART TRANSPLANT  
SURGERY IN  
NORTH KARNATAKA

- Heart surgery department founded - 1997
- Total heart surgeries - 22,253
- Successful operations on new borns to 85 year olds

RANKED 14<sup>th</sup> IN THE TOP 15  
BEST HOSPITALS IN INDIA 2018\*

\*Source - worldBlaze



**Dr. Prabhakar Kore, MP**  
Chairman, KLE Society &  
Chancellor, KAHER, Belagavi



## CLINICAL STRENGTHS

  
**4,000**  
Healthcare  
beds

  
**1,400**  
Free healthcare  
beds

  
**2,500**  
Hospital  
staff

  
**300+**  
Senior  
doctors

  
**5**  
Hospital  
locations

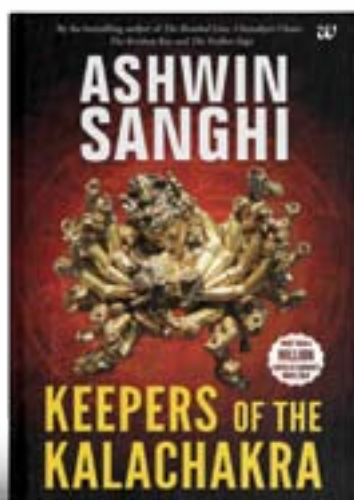






Author Ashwin Sanghi

Sanghi's latest literary outing, *Keepers of the Kalachakra*, is published by Westland



ment that came from my mother. Looking back, I now understand that the two streams came together in my consciousness to shape the author I eventually became – all the books I have written have comprised a combination of relevant content and entertainment.

As I grew older and decided to pursue an MBA, I realised that my family's business background had drilled into me the practice of being organised to the smallest detail. And this has been immensely useful for my work as an author too. I believe that you cannot pen a novel without being meticulously organised. Till date, I create my plot outlines on spreadsheets, and have found that the format lends itself surprisingly well to the process of writing!

I offer as an instance my writing of *The Sialkot Saga*, which followed the lives of two boys from 1947 to 2011. In my spreadsheet, the first column stated the year, the second stated the characters' corresponding ages, the third explored what they would have been doing at that particular point in time, the fourth delineated the political, economic, social and cultural scenario of each particular year in India and finally, the last column contained the progress of the story in that year.

As an author, once you've spent a few



I remember taking an Air India flight with my family from Mumbai to London via Rome in the mid-70s. It was my father's birthday, and the cabin crew had been kind enough to arrange a cake as well as a bottle of Champagne for him! That celebration remains to this day a very fond memory

months putting a frame like this together, the actual writing of the novel becomes effortless. And this is a lesson I have learnt from the business side of my professional spectrum.

Armed with the books I had read growing up, and the organisational skills I had developed as a student and entrepreneur, my attempt as a writer has been to strike a balance between the three things I consider seminal to a good book: entertainment, education and enlightenment.

In *Keepers of the Kalachakra*, the fifth book in my *Bharat* series, my objective has been to delve into Buddhism as well as a little bit of quantum physics. As complex as some of the concepts I have touched upon in the narrative are, I have attempted to simplify them in such a way that the book remains engaging as an easy read.

If any of my readers are able to learn something new or, alternatively, gain a new perspective on something familiar, my task as an author stands accomplished. If any of my books are able to impart entertainment, education and enlightenment to even a single reader, I have done my job well.

– As told to Nandini D Tripathy